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THE TIMES 50P

No. 65,778 SATURDAY JANUARY 4 1997

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THIS INSIDE: CAR 97, 1015 FOR YOUNG TIMES READERS, THE DIRECTORY FOR THE BEST 7-DAY TV, RADIO AND WHAT'S ON GUIDE

Gyngell praised for setting example

ITV firm bans 'Hollywood Lovers' series

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN AND RUSSELL JENKINS

A LEADING independent television executive took an extraordinary stand against sleaze yesterday by banning *Hollywood Lovers*, a prime-time documentary series expected to attract huge ratings.

Bruce Gyngell, the managing director of Yorkshire Tyne Tees Television who last year launched a crusade against sex and violence on screen, has withdrawn the four-part series from his region's schedules and replaced it with an Alan Whicker travelogue. The company, which serves eight and a half million viewers, said that several sequences were unsuitable.

Mr Gyngell's stand was praised by Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, who said: "I am greatly encouraged by the way in which regulators, programme makers and broadcasters are responding to the public mood and setting an example." But the move has angered some other ITV executives who believe the regional companies need to show a united front in the face of unprecendented scrutiny on matters of taste and decency. All the other regions will show the programme after the 9pm family viewing watershed on Wednesday.

Hollywood Lovers is the fourth in a series that started in 1993 with *Hollywood Women*. That attracted an audience of nearly 12 million — one of the biggest audiences for a documentary programme — and was followed by *Hollywood Kids*, which received a Bafta nomination, *Hollywood Men* and *Hollywood Pets*. All attracted audiences in excess of 10 million.

Gyngell: calling for Alan Whicker

In banning *Hollywood Lovers*, Mr Gyngell is understood to have objected to a detailed description of a plastic surgery procedure carried out on female genitalia and to have disliked a sequence depicting the Mile High Club, which hires out private planes equipped with double beds.

Mr Gyngell had already banned several late-night shows such as *The Good Sex Guide*, the dating game *God's Gift*, and the sex quiz *Carnal Knowledge* from his region's schedules. But this is the first time that he has banned a prime-time programme, and his company — which has paid about £120,000 towards the costs of *Hollywood Lovers* — is expected to lose advertising revenue as a result.

Claire Rayner, who worked as the agony aunt for TV-am breakfast show for seven years, said that Mr Gyngell had a "gut feeling" for what the public would tolerate. "The problem we are dealing with here is that people don't seem to know the difference between morality and taste. By all means people can say 'I don't want this programme because it is cruddy' so long as he doesn't dress it up by calling it morality," she said.

Gerald Kaufman, the Labour chairman of the National Heritage Select Committee, agreed. "There is very great deal of trash going out on television. This seems as if it may be just such trash. I have no objection to it being shown and no objection to it being prevented from being shown."

But Mary Whitehouse, honorary president of the National Viewers and Listeners Association, said that Mr Gyngell was to be congratulated. "He is someone who has shown quite a sharp mind in these matters." He also appeared to have the support of some viewers in the Yorkshire-Tyne-Tees region. In a telephone poll run by *The Yorkshire Post*, 320 callers supported Mr Gyngell's campaign and only 38 against.

But David Green, managing director of September Films which made *Hollywood Lovers*, accused Mr Gyngell of censorship and of "living in a television Jurassic Park". There was nothing in the programme that could not be shown in children's hour, he said. "At a time when there are important television issues to fight about such as violence, it's astonishing that a programme that is pure entertainment should be banned. There is nothing very intellectually profound in it, but it has a very sharp ironic edge."

And a senior ITV source said that many in the industry, including advertisers, regarded the decision as ridiculous. "There is nothing in these programmes that would damage or harm Mr Gyngell's audience," he said.

JOHN GILES

Emergency feeding for starving swans, geese and ducks at Fairburn Ings, North Yorkshire, yesterday. A ban on wildfowl shooting has been mooted

Europe-wide freeze claims 200 lives

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL, SUSAN BELL AND MARK HENDERSON

THE big chill that has killed more than 200 people across Europe is expected to persist over the weekend, although forecasters expect the easterly winds responsible for the subzero temperatures to relent next week.

The weekend's sporting programme has been devastated and travel all over the Continent has been disrupted, with breakdown and rescue services stretched to the limit. In the South of France, 30,000 travellers were stranded as the region came to a standstill. Ten thousand people spent Thursday night trapped in their cars, trains, railway stations or camping out in emergency shelters set up in schools, barracks and sports centres.

In Britain, fresh snowfalls and temperatures as low as -10C have led to the postponement of 12 of today's FA Cup ties, while others are dependent on late pitch inspections. Rugby and racing will also be severely hit and the World Pooh Sticks Championship in Oxfordshire has been postponed until March because the Thames has frozen over.

But with Scotland enjoying a sunny 4C (39F), record numbers of skiers and snowboarders are expected to take advantage of the excellent conditions at the country's five winter resorts.

The death toll from the cold snap continued to rise yesterday, adding to the problems at mortuaries already overcrowded because the ground is too hard to bury the dead. In Bucharest, where 50 people have died in the cold, the main mortuary has 120 corpses in an area normally set aside for 40. In Bonn, gravediggers used pneumatic drills to penetrate the frozen earth and in Leipzig glowing coals are being used to soften the ground.

Yesterday's victims included four people killed in Spain when a bus overturned on the ice, injuring another 22.

Two elderly German tourists died of heart failure while stranded by the snow in southeastern France, and another man froze to death after falling on ice in a Brittany wood, taking the total number killed by the cold in France since Christmas Eve to 25.

Two skiers, one Dutch and one German, died in separate avalanches in Switzerland, where the weather service has issued warnings after heavy snowfalls followed by rising temperatures.

The weather may also have contributed to the death of the musician David Hartigan, who was found collapsed in snow in Cheshire after spending the weekend at Sir Hardy Amies's country home. He is believed to have had a brain haemorrhage. In the Ukraine, six new year revellers froze to death after falling asleep outside. In Warrington, however, a sheltie dog saved the life of a teenager who lay for five hours in an alley 50 yards from his home. The dog, Gizmo, ran back to his home and alerted his owners, who followed him back to the alley

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Forecast, page 20

Rate rise fears

Fears of an interest rates rise heightened after official Bank of England figures disclosed that personal borrowing rose by a record £1.1 billion in November. The Government attempted to play down fears of a runaway consumer boom ..... Page 21

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Critics call for humiliated England to return home

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

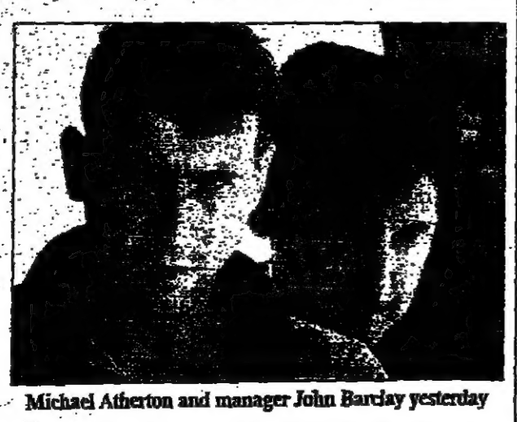
A CHORUS of criticism greeted England's final cricketing humiliation in Zimbabwe last night. There were calls for the captaincy to be taken from Michael Atherton and even for the rest of the tour, to New Zealand, to be abandoned.

England were crushed by 131 runs in Harare, bowled out for 118 after Eddo Brandes, chicken farmer and part-time cricketer, took a sensational hat-trick. The defeat gave Zimbabwe the one-day international series by a clear 3-0.

Brandes finished with five for 28 after wrecking England's top order, taking the wickets of Nick Knight, John Crawley and Nasser Hussain in successive balls.

At one stage Atherton's side were in danger of failing to pass their lowest ever one-day international total of 93, against Australia at Headingley in 1975. The England party is to leave for New Zealand today, but yesterday's result leaves the tour in crisis.

Bill Cash, Tory MP for Stafford, described the team's performance as "abysmal", adding: "English cricket has reached a new low. We have to shake the whole thing up and produce some new talent."



Michael Atherton and manager John Barclay yesterday

Geoffrey Boycott, the former England batsman, criticised the lack of preparation for the tour. "I don't call going to Portugal for a bit of golf and a bit of running about preparation for a winter cricket tour," he said.

Former England captains also joined in the criticism. Brian Close said: "This was supposed to be the best-prepared team we have ever sent on tour. They want their backsides kicking. I don't know what you can do with them." Bob Willis believes Atherton's days as captain may be numbered. "He will see out the tour, but after that he may resign, or be sacked."

Atherton himself was bloodied but unbowed. "You have two options: you give up or you fight on, and I see no point in myself or the players giving up. We have the second leg of the tour coming up, and we will be trying our best to put things right.

Report, page 40

Israeli coalition at risk over Hebron

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, has warned elements in his coalition that he will form a government with the Labour opposition if they do not support him over Hebron.

He made the threat when it began to seem possible that he might not get a majority in the Cabinet to approve an accord transferring most of the West Bank town to Palestinian self rule.

Mr Netanyahu's threat came as it became clear that a further two ministers in the fundamentalist religious Shas Party, as well as his Justice Minister, would abstain in the vote approving the deal if a harder line were not taken with the Palestinians. Earlier, seven ministers had warned the Prime Minister that he could not rely on their vote.

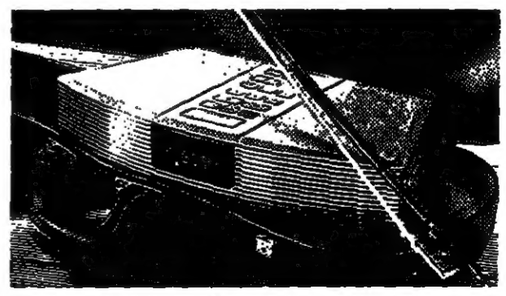
As the debate over Hebron continued yesterday, tensions rose in the West Bank. More than 200 Jewish settlers established mobile homes on a hillside outside Ramallah in an attempt to extend their settlement. They agreed later to move. But a settlers' spokesman said they planned to open negotiations with the Isreali military about starting to build on the land.

In Gaza City, Nabil Abu Rudeina, a Palestinian Authority spokesman, warned Israel against any new building for Jewish settlers. He demanded that the Government should remove immediately the settlers "whose actions seriously threaten the peace process".

Earlier this week, Mr Netanyahu told some of his coalition partners that he would have to think of forging a national unity government with Shimon Peres's party if the governing majority "continues to be so irresponsible.

"I cannot get anything passed with such a majority." Mr Netanyahu said just before it emerged that as many as ten of 18 ministers in the Cabinet would turn against him over the Hebron issue. Seven have said openly that they would vote against the accord and an eighth, Tzachi Hanegbi, the Justice Minister, has said he would join them if the Palestinians did not agree to hand over terrorists wanted for attacks against Israelis.

Attack planned, page 10



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SHOPPING: WEEKEND 3
PROPERTY: WEEKEND 7-9
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Boycott planned as prisoner in 'Dunblane' pledge is freed

Parents shun threatened schools

By Stephen Farrell

PARENTS were planning to withhold their children from schools yesterday after a violent prisoner who threatened to "do a Dunblane" was released from prison.

Mothers of children in Eltham, southeast London, demanded tighter [illegible] with primary schools [illegible] of David Jennings, who has convictions for assault and possessing a firearm in a public place.

Jennings, 50, was freed from Swaleside Prison, Kent, at 7.30am the day after Greenwich council won an emergency injunction banning him from schools and council buildings. He was immediately driven away in a van under police guard.

The former soldier, a father of ten children, admits that he made the "Dunblane" threat to a prison chaplain at High Point Prison, Suffolk, last year while serving a 30-month sentence for assaulting a social worker. He insisted that it was not a serious threat, but that he was simply angry at social services for not arranging a visit from his son.

Parents at one Greenwich school sign a petition urging legal action against Jennings

Schools were warned of his threats in a letter from Greenwich Education Service on December 19. Parents of pupils at one unnamed primary school, formerly attended by his children, refused to send them back when term begins next week. Building contractors were inside the school yesterday, but the council refused to discuss security measures. Parents say that they have been promised panic buttons and security cameras.

Shirley Barnes, 41, said: "Everyone is petrified. They told us not to worry, but how can you not? My boy is not going there until I know what is happening. Nobody is sending their children back."

Scores of residents signed a petition in local shops urging the council to take legal action. The council confirmed yesterday: "We have issued security guidelines to every school in the borough. Any school where we have had particular concerns has been visited by our security staff and the police and, if they have recommended any measures, that has been taken on board."

The interim injunction granted at the High Court on Thursday will stay in force until a full hearing on Monday, at which Jennings will contest a 250-yard exclusion zone around some schools and council buildings. He claims that the measures are unnecessarily onerous and would stop him living a normal life in an area where he has lived for 25 years.

Jennings's second wife, Samantha, refused to answer questions yesterday at her home in Abbey Wood, Greenwich, after saying earlier that her family would be forced to move from the area.

His mother, Dorothy, from Charlton, said: "I haven't heard from him today and I didn't even know he was getting out. We get on well, but I do not think he will come here."

Official Solicitor takes up abuse case

By Dominic Kennedy

THE Official Solicitor is taking the Government to the European Court of Human Rights over "inhumane treatment" suffered by five children abused by their parents.

Peter Harris, whose role is being investigated by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, over a film deal he agreed about the murderer Frederick West, will embarrass ministers if he wins. He is acting on behalf of five sisters and brothers who are trying to sue Bedfordshire County Council for failing to protect them from their parents. Local authorities could face huge claims for damages from other children in the same position if he is successful.

The House of Lords upheld a decision to strike out the case, on the grounds that councils do not owe a duty of care which can result in civil action, to protect all youngsters in their area from risk.

Harris: inquiry into role

The youngsters, now aged between seven and 14, suffered sustained ill-treatment and neglect from their parents between 1987 and 1992, when they were under ten.

Despite repeated reports of deprivation by the police, neighbours, relatives, the NSPCC, the family doctor, a social worker and a health visitor, the council allegedly did not take effective steps until 1992. It placed them on the child protection register and sought care orders.

Graduates lack basic skills, says Shephard

By John O'Leary, Education Editor

STANDARDS of the three Rs among graduates are causing concern, Gillian Shephard admitted yesterday. The Education and Employment Secretary, launching a drive to spread the Government's "back to basics" message throughout the education system, also conceded that many school-leavers were suffering from poor literacy and numeracy training.

Despite the millions of pounds devoted to raising basic skills, many job applicants still could not read satisfactorily, she said.

Mrs Shephard told the North of England Education Conference, in Sheffield, that she would act in the next few weeks to bring together the work of numerous agencies covering schools, higher education and the Employment Service.

She acknowledged the concerns of employers, who are saying in increasing numbers that students are leaving university poorly equipped in literacy and numeracy. A national centre due to open later this month is likely to be given additional responsibilities, including setting targets for improvement.

The action follows an internal review of the various government-sponsored programmes, which concluded that there was insufficient co-ordination. Some initiatives were found to overlap, wasting public money.

Measures to be announced later this month will include refresher courses for young people who leave schools with borderline reading skills. Mrs Shephard said: "There are many who, even if they leave school with a reasonable grasp of literacy and numeracy, could find themselves in difficulty again by the age of 19 or 20 unless their skills are refreshed and reinforced."

The minister said the "battle for basics" now ranged from nursery education to work-training. There was scope for the individuals and agencies involved to achieve better results.

A small but significant minority of young people faced a bleak future after leaving school without adequate levels of literacy and numeracy. About 100,000 teenagers leave school each year without a GCSE pass in maths or English.

"Low basic skills close the door on a life of learning and on countless job opportunities. They raise levels of dependency and deny access to the all-consuming technological revolution," Mrs Shephard said. "Employers are quite clear in their views about education. Even the suitability of graduates is doubted."

Cabinet support for Dorrell puts pressure on Clarke

By Arthur Leathley

CABINET ministers yesterday intensified pressure on Kenneth Clarke to take a more Euro-sceptical position as they backed Stephen Dorrell's call for a shake-up of Britain's relationship with Brussels.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, led ministers in supporting his proposal. However, the Cabinet confusion caused by Mr Dorrell's move was underlined when Mr Rifkind admitted that he had telephoned the Health Secretary at home on Thursday evening to clarify the position he was taking. Mr Dorrell "recognises, as does the Cabinet as a whole, that it [the European Union] has to be more than a free trade area, but must never become a European state," Mr Rifkind said. The Foreign Secretary insisted that Mr Dorrell's stance was in line with government policy.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, was also swift to welcome the comments made by Mr Dorrell, previously considered one of the most Europhile ministers.

However, senior Tories privately admitted that Mr Dorrell's move had shifted the ground from which the Government would campaign. One said: "Dorrell has changed the Cabinet's centre of gravity on Europe and it is now up to every minister to support that line." The Chancellor is still blocking moves to rule out Britain's joining a single European currency during the next Parliament.

Stress forces Tory MP to quit

A multimillionaire MP announced last night that stress has forced him to stand down from the Commons (Arthur Leathley writes). Barry Field, Conservative MP for the Isle of Wight, said that he had made his decision to retire at the general election after receiving medical advice.

Mr Field, the 63rd Tory MP to announce he is standing down, said: "I don't feel representing the biggest constituency in Britain is a job you can do without giving 110 per cent."

Bail appeal lost

A Crown Prosecution Service appeal against a magistrate's decision on Thursday to give bail to Michael Gallagher, 53, accused of involvement in an IRA mortar bomb attack on Heathrow, was rejected by Judge Neil Denison, Common Serjeant of London.

Teacher jailed

A teacher has been jailed for six months after pleading guilty to inciting an 11-year-old to commit an act of gross indecency. Angela Quinn, 26, of Widnes, Cheshire, passed notes to a pupil suggesting they have sex. Warrington Crown Court was told.

Lottery cash veto

The Millennium Commission has withdrawn a pledged £3.45 million total of National Lottery funding from a £5 million scheme to attract more tourists to the River Thames and a £1.4 million plan to build a tourist railway in Northern Ireland.

Girl returns

A girl who had been missing for three days went to the police yesterday after hearing a plea from her brother to come home. Lisa Barrow, 15, walked into a police station in Glasgow three hours after her brother's public appeal. She is described as healthy.

Rottweiler attack

A bride-to-be has been forced to postpone her wedding plans after her face was mauled by a rottweiler named Tyson. Helen Doyle, 21, buried her head in snow to protect herself during the attack on New Year's Day in Leeds.

Planets found

George Sallit, the third Briton to discover a planet this century, has spotted two more. Mr Sallit, 44, of Basingstoke, Hampshire, found Sallit One between Jupiter and Mars. Sallit Two and Sallit Three are in the same asteroid belt.

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Shops fight for organic market

By Robin Young

BRITAIN'S biggest conference on organic food production began yesterday with a demand from Sainsbury's for more organic farming.

It has recruited ten of its conventional produce suppliers to attend the conference, and said that it hoped the initiative might persuade more suppliers to convert to organic production to help to meet demand for produce free of chemical pesticides and fertilisers.

The three-day conference at the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester, Wiltshire, is organised by the Soil Associated, which said that Britain's 870 organic farms still represented only 0.3 per cent of the total farmed land. In Austria, a tenth of farmed land is registered for organic production.

Tesco have a trial promotion in which 13 lines of organic produce are being sold at the same price as the conventional products in other stores. Demand has increased by half in the South East stores where the experiment is in operation.

Safeway has been able to meet demand for organic fruit and vegetables by importing almost two-thirds of them.

The top 12 organic products are: 1. Fruit juices; 2. Carrots; 3. Semi-skimmed milk; 4. Free-range eggs; 5. Kiwi fruit; 6. Lettuce; 7. Avocado; 8. Cheese; 9. Mini-cucumbers; 10. Whole milk; 11. Meats; 12. Sausages. (*Source: Planet Organic.*)

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Mary Killen on how a biopathic diet made her reduce stress and lose weight: the start of a series in *The Times* next week

Cold claims 200 lives

Continued from page 1

where they found 18-year-old Stuart Fitzpatrick and called an ambulance. Mr Fitzpatrick's mother, Jane, said: "The nurse at the hospital told me he was like a frozen turkey and lucky to be alive."

Wildlife has also been suffering in the cold: hundreds of swans with hypothermia have been rescued from the Thames in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, while the National Swan Sanctuary at Egham in Surrey has been receiving injured birds from all over the country. In Poland a fox killed six swans frozen into a river as they slept and at Amsterdam zoo blackfoot penguins have been moved indoors because it is too cold for them outside.

Hydrofoil services between Copenhagen and Malmo were halted because of ice in the strait between the two cities. In the Caucasus mountains, rescuers were trying to free 30 lorry drivers still trapped after a week in the Rokshy tunnel between Russia and Georgia.

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Lesbian novelist tells of sex for Le Creuset saucepans

Winterson: insists her latest revelation is true

By Joanna Bale

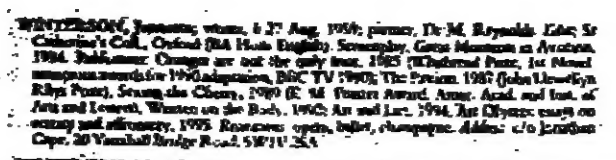
THE award-winning novelist Jeanette Winterson is to set literary tongues wagging once again with revelations about her colourful past.

In an interview in *The Times Magazine* today she says that she once worked as a lesbian "prostitute" for married women from the Home Counties in hotel rooms off Knightsbridge and Sloane Square. And, with a typical flourish, she adds that she was paid in kind, with Le Creuset saucepans.

As fantastical as it sounds, the author insisted last night that the tale was true. Describing it as a "sexual adventure", she said that in her early 20s she went to parties organised for older, married lesbians. They would give her presents of saucepans, sweaters, scarves and expensive meals in return for sex and companionship.

She said: "This all took place around 16 years ago when things were very different for older women in their fifties who found it more difficult to 'come out' as lesbians. It wasn't just gay married men who led secret lives.

"In those days I was a bit wild — I would go to bed with anything. It was great fun and I enjoyed being taken out to dinner and made a fuss of. I was never preyed upon or exploited — there was a lot of tenderness. I never regarded myself as a prostitute at the time and I don't care what people think now. It was a long time ago and it seems like another life."


WINTERSON, Jeanette; writer; b 27 Aug. 1959; partner, Dr M. Reynolds. Educ: St Catherine's Coll., Oxford (BA Hons English). Screenplay, Great Moments in Aviation, 1994. Publications: Oranges are not the only fruit, 1985 (Whitbread Prize, 1st Novel; [illegible] awards for 1990 adaptation, BBC TV 1990); The Passion, 1987 (John Llewellyn Rhys Prize); Sexing the Cherry, 1989 (E. M. Forster Award, Amer. Acad. and Inst. of Arts and Letters); Written on the Body, 1992; Art and Lies, 1994; Art Objects: essays on ecstasy and effrontery, 1995. Recreations: opera, ballet, champagne. Address: c/o Jonathan Cape, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, SW1V 2SA.

WINTERTON, 8th Earl of [illegible]

Winterson's *Who's Who* entry names her partner

The author has already been accused, some would say unfairly, of embellishing and reinventing her own past in her bestselling semi-autobiographical novel *Oranges are not the only fruit*. The 1985 novel, which won the Whitbread prize and was later serialised by the BBC, portrayed her adoptive parents as religious zealots who would let her read only the Bible and who cast her out of their home in Lancashire for being a lesbian. Although the novel was an obvious mix of truth and fiction, it caused a rift with her parents which culminated in her not being invited to her mother's funeral.

Winterson has said that the novel was never purely autobiographical but conceded that she was something of a "storyteller" when it came to her own life. "It's important to tell a good story, whether it's an anecdote about something that really happened, or a piece of fiction."

She was adamant that her latest lurid tale of a weekend "job" was no fabrication. She said that it took place over a two-year period when she came to London after graduating from St Catherine's College, Oxford. She was invited to the parties by friends she met at Gateways, a lesbian club in Chelsea which closed in 1985.

Winterson, 37, said: "When the club closed I moved to north London and lost touch with these people. I don't think this scene exists any more. Things have changed quite dramatically since then and it is easier now for middle-aged women to be openly lesbian or bisexual."

Jackie Forster, former editor of the lesbian feminist magazine *Sappho* and a member of Gateways, said that Winterson's story rang true: "The club certainly catered for and attracted these women and there are others that still do today. There are still lots of lesbian women outside London and other big cities who are forced to lead secret lives."

Winterson lives with the academic and broadcaster Margaret Reynolds, whom she lists as her partner in *Who's Who*. A spokeswoman for the publication said: "This isn't the first time we have had lesbian partners listed."

Dr Reynolds lectures in women's studies at Birmingham University, is a presenter for Radio 3 and edited the *Penguin Book of Lesbian Short Stories*. She and Winterson once arrived unannounced at the home of Nicci Gerrard, a journalist, to criticise an unflattering profile she had written of Winterson.

Magazine, page 8

Police hunting Nicola's killer warn women not to go out alone at night

Murdered girl may have been stalked from hospital disco

By Carol Midgley

DETECTIVES hunting the killer of the 17-year-old schoolgirl Nicola Dixon were last night trying to trace 220 New Year's Eve party goers after it emerged that she may have been stalked from a hospital social club disco.

Police are following numerous leads after an overwhelming public response to an appeal for information. They urged everyone who attended the dance at Good Hope Hospital Club in Sutton Coldfield, in the West Midlands, to come forward as their investigation widened.

Miss Dixon's distraught parents have issued new photographs of their daughter on a family camping holiday in the South of France last summer.

Andrew Dixon, 48, a civil engineer and his wife, Rita, also 48, a teacher, released the pictures in the hope that, by showing what they have lost, it may prompt someone with vital information to contact the police.

Detective Chief Inspector Kelvin Roberts of the West Midlands Police said: "There is nothing to suggest that she was socialising with anyone other than the people she knew but we can't rule out the possibility that she may have been followed from the club. It is the kind of club where, in the main, everyone knows everyone else so it shouldn't be too difficult to trace everyone present."

Miss Dixon, an A-level student who taught local children art and crafts as part of her Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme, was found on New Year's Day. She had been badly beaten, possibly with a brick or stone, and sexually assaulted.

Mr Roberts added: "Nicola's face was battered to such an extent that you would not have recognised her if you did not know her well. It was a terrible trauma for her parents to have to identify her. They have now gone back into shock. Their condition is worse now than when the news of their daughter's murder was first broken to them. It is dreadful for them."

Miss Dixon, who hoped to pursue a career in photography, spent about half an hour at the hospital club before setting off at 9.45pm on New Year's Eve to walk less than a mile to the Station pub in Sutton Coldfield to meet friends.

She was attacked as she took a short cut to the town centre by Holy Trinity Church. The vicar's wife, Valerie Connolly, 47, found Miss Dixon's body dumped in a garden near a curate's house. Her injuries showed that she had put up a ferocious struggle and police say the killer would have been heavily bloodstained.

Detectives have been overwhelmed by the public's response to the murder. They have received more than 150 calls, some of which report sightings of a stranger in the area. But police emphasise that the sightings were of several different strangers and this would not be unusual since it was New Year's Eve. However, local women have been advised not to go out alone.

Yesterday PC James Winfield, 21, Miss Dixon's former boyfriend from whom she split up two weeks ago, was staying with friends and too upset to speak. Mr Winfield, who is based at Ladywood, Birmingham, collapsed when he was told of Miss Dixon's death on New Year's Day as he turned up for a drink at the Station pub.

A spokesman said on his behalf: "He is just devastated, he cannot believe that this has happened. He just needs to be alone so that he can come to terms with things."

Last night a friend of Miss Dixon's told how she sat at her table at the hospital disco. Joanne Brittan, 19, said she had heard that Nicola had left the disco early to search for a girlfriend who did not show up. Miss Brittain said: "I remember her earlier in the evening messing around and asking people to dance but none of us wanted to because the dance floor was empty. I think I remember when she went because I moved into her empty chair and she asked me for her coat which was on the back of it."

Doug Ellis, the chairman of Aston Villa Football Club, who is also the chairman of Good Hope Hospital, offered a £1,000 reward for information leading to the capture of the killer. Mr Ellis said: "It is sad that she should have met her death so soon after enjoying herself at the hospital club. We must do everthing we possibly can to bring the killer to justice."

Miss Dixon's headmaster at Fairfax School described her as compassionate, hard working, sensible and level headed. Richard Metcalf said: "Nicola was a delightful girl. She will be missed enormously."

Police are still searching for the murder weapon and Miss Dixon's black handbag and purse which they believe may have been thrown over a garden wall or hidden in shrubbery.

Mr Roberts said: "The killer may have confided in someone or someone could be harbouring him. We appeal to anyone to think of the brutality of this murder and contact us immediately."

Police have recovered a large concrete block which was dropped on the head of a French woman who was battered to death in Co Cork on December 22. The block, which crushed the skull of Sophie Toscan du Plantier, 38, a television producer, was found near her holiday home. A Garda source in Co Cork confirmed yesterday that detectives had uncovered the concrete block and a bloodied stone.

One of the photographs released by Nicola Dixon's parents yesterday, showing her celebrating her 17th birthday in August on holiday in the South of France

Parents of drug death boy warn against Ecstasy

By Lin Jenkins

THE grieving parents of an "irrepressible" teenager who died at a New Year's Eve rave party appealed yesterday to young people not to take Ecstasy.

John and Maria Hitchens spoke of their "absolute treasure" of a son Robert in the hope that others would be prompted to shun drugs.

Robert, 16, died on New Year's Day, ten hours after collapsing at an all-night rave at the David Lloyd sports centre at Heston, west London. A post-mortem examination failed to establish a cause of death, but toxicology tests are expected to show that he died from taking Ecstasy.

"I could not wish for a better son. He was likeable, comical, a cheeky little monkey. He would not listen to me if he thought he knew best. He was a wonderful son," his father said. His mother clutched her husband's hand as she overcame her choking grief to warn others: "Do not take it. It is lethal. I have lost my youngest son. Please, for my Robert, don't let it happen again."

Robert, a trainee computer engineer, went to the £25-a-head rave, which was run for the third year by Interspace Promotions, with his brother Matthew, 19, and a teenage friend. He died in Ealing Hospital, west London, where he was taken after being treated by paramedics when he collapsed at the sports centre. He was one of four teenage boys and a 24-year-old woman believed to have died as a result of taking Ecstasy over the holiday.

Detective Inspector Sue Hill, who is leading the hunt for the supplier of the drug, reiterated the parents' warning. "There is only one thing that youngsters should be aware of when you take an Ecstasy tablet: you are playing Russian roulette, and one Ecstasy tablet can kill you." Police had established that Robert brought the tablet with him to the rave. "His brother is very traumatised. He is feeling very guilty that his baby brother is dead," she said.

The rave was well run. The organisers had employed 36 guards to police the partygoers and make sure that drugs were not brought in or sold at the sports centre. "Everthing was done to prevent this, but it is very difficult to search 2,000 people," Ms Hill said.

Robert Hitchen: died at New Year's Eve rave

Mr Hitchens spoke with pride about how Robert left school last year with good examination results and set about finding a job. He would return to the family home in Upminster, Essex, each evening talking excitedly about the job he loved and what he had done that day.

"All parents, look at your children, ask them questions, don't take no for an answer. They will tell you what they want to tell you, but be strong and perhaps we can avoid another tragedy like this."

Irish eyes smile on TV village that the critics scorned

By Nicholas Watt
Chief Ireland Correspondent

IT was scorned by Irish critics for pandering to romantic British notions of rural Ireland. Now the whimsical TV drama *Ballykissangel* is returning for a second series, with a huge following in the Republic.

The programme tells the story of an English priest posted to a fictional village. Irish critics said that viewers would scoff at its light-hearted view, filmed in Avoca, Co Wicklow, and contrasted it with a gritty, homegrown soap opera *Glenroe*, which is filmed less than 20 miles away.

In the end, viewers on both sides of the Irish Sea were glued to the first series, to watch the unfolding relationship between Father Peter Clifford and the local barmaid, Assumpta Fitzgerald.

Father Breen, left, and the cast of the fictional *Ballykissangel*. Tourism has grown in the host village of Avoca, which received a restoration grant yesterday as viewers prepared for the programme's return

More than 450,000 people watched on the Irish channel RTE — almost half the figure for the much longer established *Glenroe*.

It has not harmed the Irish tourist trade either. As the return starts on BBC1 tomorrow night — with some Irish viewers able to tune in on cable — *Ballykissangel* has already provided a boon for Avoca.

The village at the heart of the "Garden of Ireland" has been transformed by the programme. Locals are using money from the BBC to restore the centre of their picturesque village which had been in decline since a nearby mine closed 14 years ago with the loss of 1,000 jobs.

Two derelict buildings have been pulled down in the centre of the village, and a park has been built for British tourists.

Liz MacManus, the Irish Republic's housing minister, visited the village yesterday to present £2,000 of European Union funds to restore its 15th-century courthouse, which will form the centrepiece of the park.

Mrs McManus said: "*Ballykissangel* has been very important to the revival of Avoca. The locals know that the interest will not last forever, and so they want to build tourist facilities to build on the attention."

Father Dan Breen, the local parish priest, said he was delighted with the transformation. An avid fan of Ballykissangel, who has become something more of a local character since the series was filmed, he said: "You would hardly recognise Avoca now.

"I'm sure that if the village had been in this condition when the producers first came to Avoca, they would not have chosen it. They originally wanted somewhere with a run-down, seedy look."

Vicar faces open court over woman's claims of affair

Glover: strongly denies allegations against him

By Ruth Gledhill
Religion Correspondent

A CHURCH of England clergyman is to face a trial before a church court after a married parishioner claimed he made her pregnant.

The Rev Eddie Glover, former priest-in-charge of Trimdon Station, Durham, will be the third Church of England clergyman in 30 years to be tried on a charge of "conduct unbecoming to the office and work of a clergy in Holy Orders". The charge against him has been laid just weeks after the General Synod agreed to replace its 900-year-old consistory courts with private tribunals.

Mr Glover, who denies the allegations by Margaret Orpen, which relate to when he was working at St Mary Magdelene's Church in Trimdon, the parish of Labour leader Tony Blair, will appear before the ecclesiastical court later this month. The court, which will at Auckland Castle, residence of the Bishop of Durham, the Right Rev Michael Turnbull, will be presided over by the diocesan chancellor, the Rev Rupert Bursell, QC, a circuit judge from Bristol.

Mrs Orpen reported the affair to Church authorities in 1995 and went public with her claims in June last year. Mr Glover, who is married with two children, resigned his licence on health grounds in 1995.

Bishop Turnbull has already investigated the claims and decided there is a case to answer. Judge Bursell will sit with four assessors, two local clergy and two laymen, selected by ballot from a panel of 12. Mr Glover will be represented by a solicitor. Canon Michael Perry, the bishop's senior chaplain, has been nominated to promote the complaint.

The case is the third involving allegations of "conduct unbecoming" to be heard under the system of justice brought into place in 1963 by the church's Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure. Canon Perry said: "This particular method has only been used twice since 1963. It is very unusual."

If found guilty, Mr Glover could be rebuked, admonished, suspended or defrocked.

In 1992, the Rev Thomas Tyler was found guilty of adultery with two parishioners after two trials and two appeals which cost the church £300,000. In 1995, the Dean of Lincoln, Dr Brandon Jackson, was acquitted after being accused of improper behaviour towards a former cathedral verger.

After Dr Jackson's trial and the publicity surrounding it, many church leaders felt it was not in the interests of justice or the church for such cases to be in the public arena. However, the case against Mr Glover will proceed in public.

Orpen: claims priest made her pregnant

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PETER TREVNOR

Two injured swans, wrapped in blankets, under the care of Melanie Beeson at the National Swan Sanctuary. The birds can become trapped in ice after falling asleep

Birds left weak and hungry by harsh weather offered respite from shooters

Snow brings call for wildfowl gun ban

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

A TEMPORARY ban on wildfowl shooting will be introduced next week if John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, accepts the recommendation of the Government's wildlife advisers.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee is calling for the wildfowl shooting season to be halted for 14 days because of the impact of the bad weather on animals.

There is concern that large numbers of birds already weakened by the effects of the bitter cold, such as pink-footed geese, white-fronted geese, teal and mallard, will die because of the stress of trying to avoid shooters' guns.

Nicola Crockford, species and habitats policy officer with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, said yesterday: "The reason for the wildlife ban is not the impact of the direct killing of birds but the additional distress and extra energy needed to fly around as they become disturbed by the shooters and their guns."

Many birds are suffering because the harsh conditions have made it hard to feed. "The freezing weather means many wildfowl are finding it difficult to find food and they need more food to keep warm. This is severe weather where only the fittest survive. We are concerned that there could be a big die-off this winter." Ms Crockford said. The RSPB also urged the public not to disturb wild birds during the bad weather.

The British Association of Shooting and Conservation has been consulted about the ban and has already urged shooting clubs to exercise restraint. Tony Laws, deputy director of the association, said: "It will affect thousands of shooters."

The legally-binding ban, which Mr Gummer can approve under provisions in the Wildlife and Countryside Act, would also benefit wading birds which are not the targets of hunters but could be disturbed by them. These birds may be finding it hard to break through ice to find food such as shellfish. Birds such as the plover, which hunts invertebrates moving across mudflats, are also having difficulty finding food because of the strong winds.

The ban could especially benefit oystercatchers on the Wash, one of Britain's premier habitats for wildfowl and wading birds. Oystercatcher numbers have fallen by a third in recent years, with the drop linked to a decline in the birds' diet of cockles and mussels.

Swan Lifeline, a charity based in Eton, Berkshire, said that hundreds of swans had had to be rescued from the Thames because the river had frozen. "The birds fall asleep overnight and become trapped in the ice. Their legs are then frozen under the water and they cannot do anything." Carol Marriott, a spokesman for the charity, said.

The Environment Agency yesterday launched an ice-breaking barge at nearby Caversham to help swans and other birds to feed. A spokesman for the government agency said: "The sheet of ice has left the swans and other birds no chance of feeding. We will be trying to break up the ice so that they can get to their feeding grounds at Caversham Bridge."

The National Swan Sanctuary at Egham, Surrey, has received injured birds from across the country and is currently caring for about 500. Dot Beeson, the director, said it was the worst winter since the sanctuary was founded 17 years ago: "We have been inundated with swans with hypothermia and birds that have ripped their toenails out trying to get out of icy lakes and rivers.

"Most of the young birds have never endured the weather conditions we have got at the moment and they are bewildered. The birds get very weak, they can't move and the ice freezes around them."

Ms Beeson appealed to the public to provide food for birds that lived on water as well as garden birds during the severe weather.

Seal pups on the Cornish coast are also faring badly in the bitter conditions. Mandie Thompson, of the National Seal Sanctuary in Gweek, said yesterday that 11 pups were being treated in its hospital.

Forecast, page 20

HOW TO HELP WILDLIFE

■ **Frogs, hibernating in the mud at the bottom of garden ponds, will run out of oxygen and die in about five days if the pond is frozen over. The ice should be broken gently by using boiling water in saucepans.**

■ **Do not used de-icing chemicals to unfreeze ponds as these can be lethal. It is better to put out saucers and pans of fresh water for birds morning and afternoon.**

■ **Birds require fatty foods to provide energy. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds says that wrens will eat grated cheese scattered along flowerbeds. Shredded suet and peanuts are a good source for tits, finches, robins and dunnock. Bread, especially brown, and fruit, such as sultanas and raisins that have been soaked, are also recommended.**

■ **Hibernating species, such as dormice, hedgehogs and bats, are likely to benefit from the cold temperatures as they will have a lower metabolic rate and so will maintain fat supplies. But shrews, which feed on the insects that are harder to find in harsh weather, would benefit from a little chopped meat concealed beneath a rock or at the bottom of a compost heap.**

Man's greed drives more species to edge of extinction

By Daniel McGrory

EXTINCTION is a growth industry. It is estimated that greed for land and illegal trade are driving about 23,000 species to extinction each year — and the rate is accelerating.

Of the four billion life forms on this planet at one time or another, 3.96 billion no longer exist. Unless we recognise the danger, those species lost forever could soon include the tiger, the chimpanzee, the whale and the elephant.

Scientists in Britain say that there are 600 species of flora and fauna in danger of disappearing by the end of the century, including the red squirrel, the golden eagle, the dormouse and the water vole.

The charity Tusk Force is dedicated to protecting the great and the small. In seven projects across the world, from Siberia to Scotland, it is working to save scores of creatures.

Neela Bettridge, the charity's director, said: "In every case, we see the conflict between mankind and the animals and we know who wins every time. How can we deprive future generations of animals that we wantonly took for granted? The statistics shame our generation."

Barely 5,000 Siberian tigers remain in the wild. Half the African elephant population has disappeared in the past 30 years; fewer than 580,000 remain. The Amur leopard is amongst the most magnificent sights in the wild; 50 are thought to survive. The rhinoceros has been on the earth for 40 million years; of the five species that remain, there are only 11,000 left.

At a wildlife auction in South Africa earlier this year, 139 rhinos were sold, including some for sport hunting operations. Poachers sell rhino horn for £21,000 a kilo to those manufacturing traditional Asian medicines, which remain among the greatest threats to wildlife.

In September, a joint undercover operation by police and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals found a cache of 105 white and black rhino horns in London valued at nearly £3 million.

Ten thousand bears are caged in appalling conditions in farms in China, kept for the bile which advertising promotes as a remedy to intestinal, liver and other cardiac illnesses. There are fewer than 50,000 Asiatic black bears left and poachers grow ever more desperate.

Police in Vietnam have this year made several raids at Hanoi airport to rescue rare wild animals that were destined for consumption in China, and the smuggling trade there is growing at an alarming rate, with 500 incidents reported in the past two years alone.

"There are international agreements which are too often ignored or poorly policed," Neela Bettridge said. Established in 1989, the charity has sent £2 million to a variety of conservation programmes. Tusk Force helps to fund tiger poaching patrols in Russia, ranger groups to protect the rhino in Namibia and a similar operation to defend the elephants in Zambia.

In danger: red squirrel

In danger: water vole

Their work is used by more than 10,000 schools and the charity has instigated a series of conservation awards to encourage more children to take an interest and a stake in saving wildlife here and abroad.

Tusk Force is also planning its most potent and controversial advertising war ever in the Far East to persuade consumers to boycott the unscrupulous trade in threatened wildlife.

Tusk Force Appeal

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THE TIMES CHRISTMAS APPEAL TUSK FORCE

Man jailed for raping widow who answered ad

By A Staff Reporter

A HUSBAND who used a newspaper lonely-hearts column to meet middle-aged women was yesterday jailed for five years for raping a widow so violently that she was left confined to a wheelchair.

Brian Wolsgrove, 63, a former taxi-driver from Southsea, Hampshire, met more than 20 women in 14 months after placing the advertisement offering "tender loving care". The judge, Mr Recorder Roger Titheridge, QC, sitting at Winchester Crown Court, told Wolsgrove that he had lied about his name and the fact that he was married to persuade at least some of the women to have sex with him.

The court heard that Wolsgrove had begun placing advertisements in a newspaper after his wife had stopped having sex with him because of a medical problem. She devoted herself to work for the Salvation Army.

Wolsgrove met a number of women, mostly in their fifties. In November 1995, his advertisement was answered by a 62-year-old woman from Gosport who was looking for companionship after the death of her husband. They talked on the telephone, met for a chat in a local café and arranged a date at her home for that evening. She said: "He was very, very polite and well-dressed and he was a charming man. He said to me: 'How about I come to your home and see you this evening?' I said 'OK' and gave him my address."

Wolsgrove, who had told her his name was Peter, arrived at the house. Later, when the woman said she was tired and asked him to leave, he asked her when she had last had sex and put his hand on her knee. "I pushed him away and said: 'Peter, I don't want anything like that. I just want companionship and friendship.' I got up and I thought he was going to go. But he turned around and pushed me back on the sofa."

Wolsgrove then raped her, slapped her across the face and left the house. During the assault, she suffered bruising and damage to the base of her spine. Wolsgrove, arrested two days later, later told police that the widow had agreed to sex and had responded and encouraged him. He denied the charge.

Mr Recorder Titheridge told him: "This was a wicked offence. The effects upon the victim were considerable. This is not, in my judgment, a case for leniency. You don't deserve leniency."

Stewart Patterson, for the defence, told the judge after the verdict was given that Wolsgrove's wife of 40 years was standing by him.

Lord Robens

In a report on January 1 we wrongly stated that Lord Robens had died in 1993. We very much regret this error and apologise to Lord and Lady Robens and their family.

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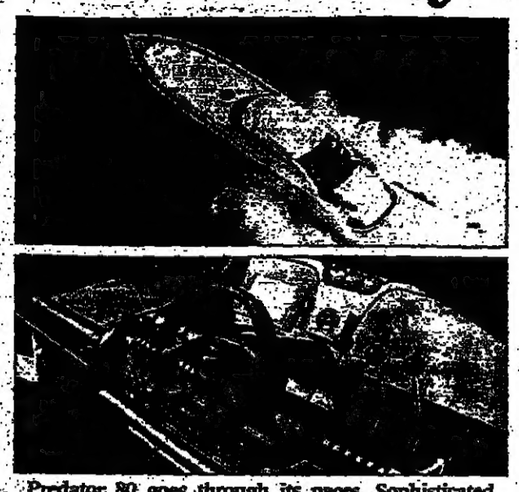
Tide turns for boat trade as rich run away to sea

By Damian Whitworth

THE super-rich are back, and determined to leave clear blue water between themselves and poorer mortals.

After a period in the doldrums, Britain's most exclusive boat builders are racing to meet record demand for their most luxurious yachts. Unlike the yuppie boom of the 1980s, the new spending spree is attributed to the strength of the "grey pound" — middle-aged businessmen who have survived lean times and want to enjoy themselves again.

The sort of man who might once have been happy realising a long-held fantasy of a Rolls-Royce or red sports car is now said to be turning to the water for escapism, with a 55ft motor yacht as his first vessel. At the London International Boat Show at Earls Court yesterday, the manufacturers of boats with £1 million-plus prices said that demand was outstripping supply, with waiting lists of up to two years. The most luxurious motor yachts at the Boat Show bristle with satellite navigational technology and computer controls which allow the boats to be crewed by just a couple of people and still travel at speeds in excess of 30 knots. Prices of each model can vary because of the opportunities for customising furnishings and interior decor.



Predator 80 goes through its paces. Sophisticated controls make cruising easier for the amateur

Christopher Rubython, managing director of Princess Yachts International, who were displaying the most expensive boat at the show, a 20-metre power yacht costing more than £1 million, said: "Our customers are the more controlled and more mature buyers — people who survived the recession through their prudence and have now got the confidence to spend."

The company's biggest vessel, a £1.5 million, 22-metre yacht, is sold out 18 months ahead. Aside from wealthy businessmen, Mr Rubython's customers include lottery winners.

Anyone with £1.8 million to spare, and taking a fancy to the 80ft Predator, manufactured by Dorset-based company Sunseeker, will have to bide their time for at least two years before taking delivery of their dream boat. This is after the company has expanded its workforce from 400 to 680 and opened a new shipyard, specifically to construct its most expensive yachts.

The Predator 80 is too big to fit into the show arena, but even the 58ft Predator can sleep six in three cabins with en-suite facilities. Like the big Fairline yachts, it has capacious sundecks and thickly carpeted, leather-furnished lounges and room for jet bikes.

"In the early to mid-1990s, the industry was in the doldrums," said Tony Morgan, a UK distributor of Fairline who had a 66ft, £1 million power boat on display on the biggest-ever stand at the Boat Show. "But people who have made their profits are now spending on boats again."

Richard Matthews, chairman of Oyster Marine, Britain's largest sailboat builder by turnover, said: "People are cashing in their chips and using the cash to buy a yacht. We are selling more to people new to sailing because boats are easier to handle these days. You can get a pushbutton boat now. People are buying a 55ft boat as their introduction to sailing."

Although he had just sold a 61ft, £1 million boat in Bahrain, he feared the strength of the pound did not make for good export business. About buoyant British trade, he had no doubts. "But the Boat Show is a showcase for us. You don't see people just walking in and signing up for a £2 million boat." Two minutes later one of his salesmen sat at the next table with a customer. The man, who did not wish to be named, said: "I made my money and bought a boat. Now I've come back for a top-of-the-range boat to go round the world."

ANDRE CAMARA

The 58ft Predator on display at the Boat Show. Its makers have opened a new boatyard to cope with demand

Dirty dealers put City's computer secrets on the line

By Russell Jenkins

WALK into any dealing room in the City, switch on a computer and type in the passwords *Westham*, *Missionary* or *Divine Brown* and the chances are you'll be given access to the company's secrets.

That is the conclusion of a survey into secret passwords used by dealers in the Square Mile to log on to their computers each morning. They are almost twice as likely to be about sex or football, or an insulting nickname for the boss, than the names of wives or girlfriends.

Among the passwords, which emerged from the survey carried out for Company Computer via Reuters City Screen service, were "6ULDV8" (sexual deviate), *7:15 sprinter to Borehamwood* for the most annoying train of that week, *Kiss My A*** Colin*, a message aimed at a persistent hacker. The popular sporting passwords were *Shanks*, after the late Liverpool manager Bill Shankly, *Chelsea*, *Birdie* and *Westham*.

Fifteen per cent of respondents logged on using the name of their favourite holiday destination, perhaps to remind them of why they were at work in the first place. Eight per cent chose the first thing they saw on their desk, creating passwords such as *Qwerty*, *Password* and *Please*.

Some of the more unusual ones were *KingsRoadmate*, *Gaddafi* and the 50-plus letters that make up the longest placename in Wales.

Martin Skinner, a lecturer in psychology at Warwick University, said: "I think the City has quite a laddish culture and they take a cavalier, jokey and lewd attitude towards passwords. It is a bit of gaiminious radeness."

The findings have appalled computer security experts, horrified that the hacker could walk into the average dealing room, type in a football team and access a valuable database.

Chris Hook, formerly managing consultant at the National Computing Centre, in Manchester, said the findings were horrendous, "particularly in City institutions where you are talking about very high-value transactions accessed by using the right password". Companies should insist on proper procedures and change passwords regularly.

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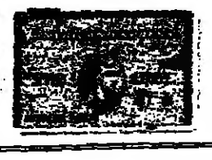
And if you take the Eurostar, your family gets a free upgrade to First Class[2] All for just paying with the Card. And now more than ever, this is a spectacular time to go.

Now's a great time to go: the birthday party of the year!

This January, Disneyland Paris kicks off their 5th Anniversary Birthday party and there are some very special festivities and magical new entertainment in store for children and adults alike. Such as the *Hunchback of Notre Dame Carnival*, the sensational all-new Disney parade inspired by the recent Disney movie. You'll see Sleeping Beauty Castle completely transformed with fantastic topsy-turvy decorations, and the spellbinding new musical show, *Disney Classics: The Music and the Magic*, is an amazing feast for the eyes and the ears. So the happiest place on earth is even happier during this extraordinary birthday party!

Service Magique: giving you more of the magic

The American Express Service Magique programme offers seven exclusive benefits to Cardmembers who stay at participating Disneyland Paris hotels for two nights or more. Just book and pay with the Card through Disneyland Paris, or an American Express Travel Service Office, and you'll get significant discounts on merchandise in Disney Village and hotel stores, as well as on entertainment. Plus free lunches for children, free drinks at the hotel bar, a free photo of you and your family at the Theme Park, even two free Disneyland Paris coffee mugs as a souvenir.



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Call now to join the party!

Reserve your places at the Fifth Anniversary party now! Come for a fabulous weekend, or more than that by taking advantage of this offer for the Kids upcoming school holidays. Making the dream a reality has never been easier. To give you and your children access to all the special magic, call today at the number below. Simply mention that you intend to book with the American Express Card, and that you'd like to take advantage of both the Kids Free programme, and all the special benefits reserved exclusively for American Express Cardmembers.

Call Disneyland Paris directly on: 0990 03 03 03

Disneyland Paris

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[1]The Kids Free special offer runs from January 1 to March 26, 1997: with every pre-booked, pre-paid adult package, one child sharing a room with one or more adults (maximum of 4 people in a room) receives free Accommodation/Continental Breakfast/Theme Park Entrance for the duration of the stay. When travelling on Eurostar direct services from London Waterloo International and Ashford International, Lille to Disneyland Paris, the child receives a free ticket in the same class as the paying adult ticket. The kids free offer must be requested when booking the adult package. This offer is not cumulative with other special offers. Child 3-11 years inclusive. [2]Offer subject to availability. Standard terms and conditions apply. Full terms and conditions are available upon request. Eurostar direct service to Disneyland Paris operates only on Fridays, returning from Disneyland Paris on Sundays only. Fares will only be valid on Eurostar direct services to Marne La Vallée and not on services that change at Lille.

Reluctant homage to city that tamed a desert

Explorer returns to the shifting sands of Arabia

FROM BARRY MAY OF REUTER IN DUBAI

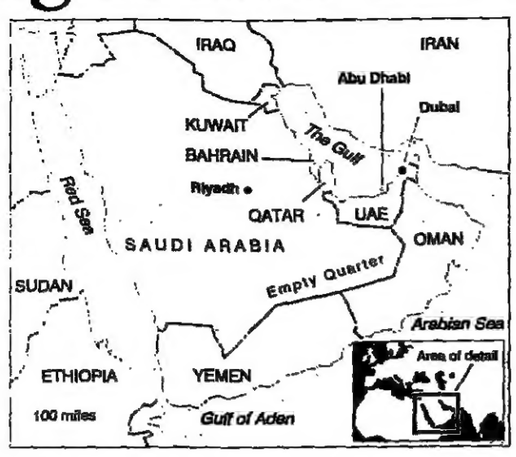
THE explorer Sir Wilfred Thesiger, reconciled but resentful of the changes caused by the discovery of oil, was reunited with two ghosts of his past when he visited Dubai to open a photographic exhibition of his travels in southern Arabia in the 1940s.

Sir Wilfred, 86, met two Bedums who, as teenagers, had been his constant companions as he journeyed across the barren Empty Quarter.

Salim bin Kabina and Salim bin Ghabaisha, now grey-haired but then young camel rustlers, were pictured barefoot and youthfully clean-shaven atop a crag in Sir Wilfred's account of his travels, *Arabian Sands*, published in 1959.

The photograph shows them with rifles slung over their shoulders, while cartridge belts and *khanjars* — curved daggers — worn at their waists complete the warrior image.

Breeding and trading in camels and engaging in tribal blood feuds seemed to be their primary occupations. The two young men called the Oxford-educated Englishman — tall, lean and ascetic — *Mubarak*, the blessed one. Cursed — or blessed — with wanderlust, Sir Wilfred first crossed the vast desert with the two nomads in six weeks in 1946. He left in 1950 after another crossing and said later that he regarded his time in the desert as "the happiest years of my life".



"I was determined to meet the challenge of the desert and be on equal terms with the Bedu," he said as he guided bin Kabina and bin Ghabaisha — themselves agog at Dubai in all its modernity — around the exhibition and smiled at the pictures of them as young tribesmen. Dubai, a city of large, steel-and-glass office blocks, luxury hotels and eight-lane highways that are a tribute to the success of a relentless battle to tame the desert, contrasted markedly with the exhibition of some of the many monochrome photographs he took during his travels.

He said *Arabian Sands* had been "a memorial to a vanished past, a tribute to a once magnificent people".

But the Dubai of today was completely different from the small fishing village and port on the creek he once knew. "The last time I was here I barely recognised Dubai Creek," he said. "It's very impressive — I'm not saying I like it.

"I prefer it the way it was the first time I came here. I've always detested cars and planes. They diminish the world and rob it of all its diversity."

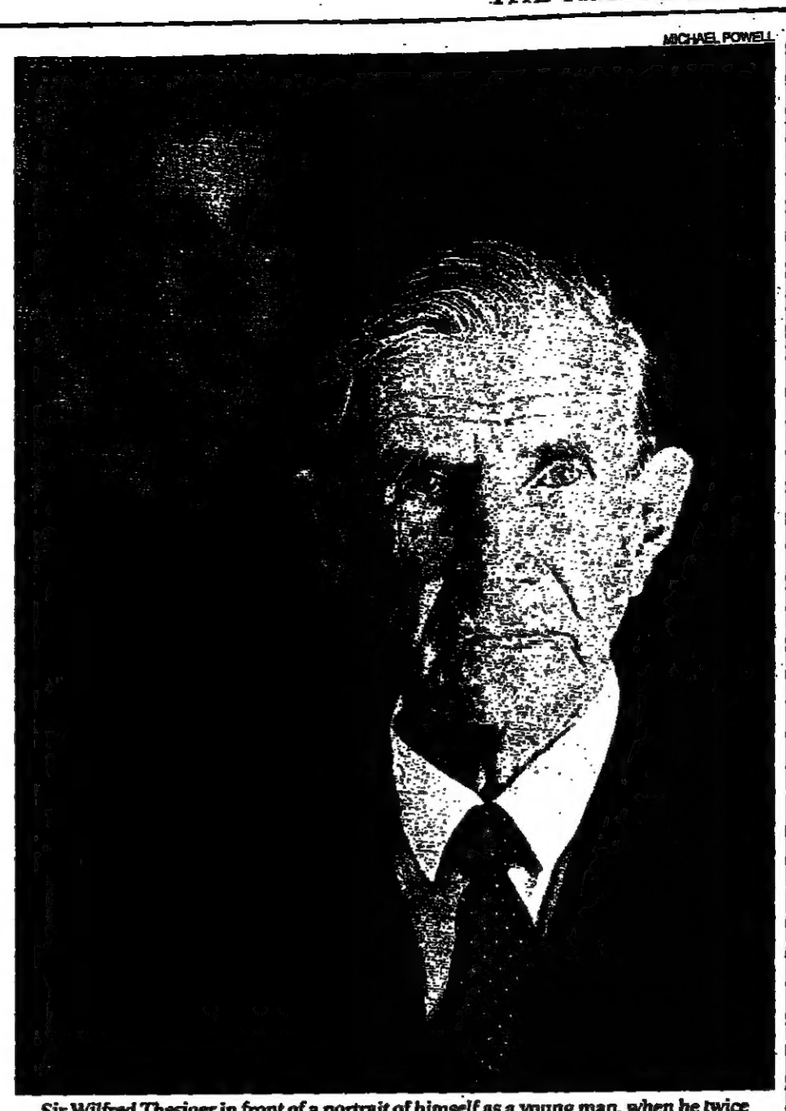
Sir Wilfred loves the silence of the desert and blames the discovery of oil for the disappearance of the life he knew. When he first returned to Arabia in 1977, he found Abu Dhabi, capital of the newly formed country of the United Arab Emirates, "an Arabian nightmare, the final disillusionment".

Abu Dhabi's high-rise buildings and oil refineries, spread over what had been empty desert, symbolised all that he hated — modernity in all its aspects.

Back in the city in 1990 for a previous photographic exhibition, sponsored by his old friend and ruler of the Emirates, Sheikh Sultan Zayed bin al-Nahayan, Sir Wilfred found himself reconciled to the inevitable changes in Arabia which had been brought about by vast oil wealth and were typified by the Emirates.

"Abu Dhabi is now an impressive modern city, made pleasant in this barren land by avenues of trees," he wrote.

MICHAEL POWELL



Sir Wilfred Thesiger in front of a portrait of himself as a young man, when he twice crossed the Empty Quarter in southern Arabia, accompanied by Beduin nomads

Water firm takes £2m too much

South West Water overcharged 14,000 customers a total of more than £2 million when it collected their direct debit payments twice. The error, amounting to an average overpayment of more than £140, was noticed within a day. The company said yesterday that it would reimburse any bank charges incurred by customers. Ian Douglas, the finance director, said: "One of my staff made a mistake."

Fall in flu cases

The number of people contracting flu dropped over the Christmas holiday. In the week to December 29, the incidence was 122.2 people with flu or flu-like illness per 100,000 of the population; compared with 128.9 the previous week, the Royal College of General Practitioners said.

Stick for Punch

A women's group in Barry, South Wales, wants to ban a Punch and Judy pantomime from being held in the town. A spokeswoman for Women's Aid said: "It isn't appropriate in the late 1990s to expect children to laugh at a man bashing women over the head with a stick."

Key moment

A Volvo driver, who was cut up on the Gloucester bypass, forced a BMW driver to stop, snatched his keys after an argument and drove off. He handed the keys to police, saying the BMW driver was not fit to be on the road. The police later returned the keys to the stranded motorist.

In the drink

A trawler crew are the toast of the port of Ardglass, Co Down, after netting a container holding 27 bottles of spirits and 30 of wine. More of the containers — swept off a ship in bad weather — are believed to be in the area and fishermen are determined to track down the rest.

Roman find

A Roman wall and other artefacts were discovered by a man digging a drainage hole in his back garden. Bill Graham, of Southampton, is believed to have uncovered part of the Roman town of Clausentum. The 5ft-thick wall may have come from a beacon to guide ships up the Itchen.

Rent rooted out

Fran Hurdman, landlady of The Rose and Lion pub in Bromyard, Hereford and Worcester, who had agreed to pay her yearly rent in parsnips, has handed over the first payment to Peter Amor, owner of the Wye Valley Brewery, who had wanted the garden kept up.

Monarch of the cliffs is found dead

BY ALAN HAMILTON

A RED deer stag that was believed to be the oldest on Exmoor has been found dead in a remote area of north Somerset, ending a decade's reign as monarch of the moor. It is believed to have been wounded by a hunter and limped away to die.

The animal, estimated to have been 18 years old, was known as the Cliff Stag from its preferred grazing grounds on steeply wooded cliffs above the Bristol Channel. Its body was discovered by chance by Graham Floyd, a local deer expert, who recognised its 14-point antlers.

The stag is thought to have been shot by a legal hunter who attempted to make an immediately fatal hit but instead wounded the animal, causing its death some days later. Six other dead stags were found on the same day.

Mr Floyd said: "He was master stag around here. All the other deer are youngsters compared with him."

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SAVE £15 Pearl 3 Fold Acrylic Shower Screen WAS £54.99 £39.99

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Tongue & Groove Softwood Cladding 1.8m. Pack of 5. WAS £4.95 £4.39 per pack

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

AGONY IN ANTARCTICA

"Morphine. I had to have morphine. I cried out as each new surge of excruciating pain gripped my stomach, back and groin. But my screams went unheard..."

Ranulph Fiennes, the veteran explorer, reveals the torture that engulfed him when he set out at the age of 53 two months ago to race a young rival to the South Pole and beyond

Read Fiennes's own story of his agony in Antarctica tomorrow in News Review

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

'People are looking for guidance. This is not so much a competition, more a festival'

Your invitation to spread the word of God

By Ruth Gledhill
Religion Correspondent

PREACHERS are invited today to submit sermons for the Preacher of the Year award, sponsored by *The Times*. This year, for the first time, preachers will be permitted to submit tapes as well as written texts.

The award, organised by the College of Preachers and in its third year, has raised the profile of preaching after a decade when many had written off both religion and God as irrelevant to society.

The Bishop of Durham, the Right Rev Michael Turnbull, said that the relevance of the sermon to public life had rarely been more important, giving church leaders a pulpit from which to speak out on moral and spiritual values at a time when their contribution was needed more than ever.

The award is intended to raise the profile of both preaching and preachers. More than 800 preachers submitted sermons over the first two years.

Bishop Turnbull, who chairs the council of the College of Preachers, said: "Sermons are still a major opportunity to influence the life of the nation, reaching hundreds of thousands of people every week.

"They are presented to every community in the land, usually by someone who knows the people well. The preacher lives among the people and knows what their concerns are. He or she speaks from knowledge of their needs and aspirations. The preacher is potentially a powerful force in opinion-forming on political and moral issues, as these issues are talked about nationally and worked on locally." Most people, while sceptical of other forms of communication, still trusted preachers, he said. The preacher's mission had been given an added urgency by the moral debates of last year, over the Dunblane shootings and the murder of the headmaster Philip Lawrence.

The Right Rev James Jones, Bishop of Hull and a member of the college council, said: "With people looking for guidance on moral and spiritual issues, the sermon, with one million preached each year, is one of the principal means of helping people to see the relevance of the Christian faith to the moral basis of our society. I would like to pay tribute to the role of *The Times* in raising the profile of preaching in this country. It is not so much a competition, more a festival. Preaching is an art but requires certain skills. The award has helped people to see the importance of acquiring these skills."

About 30,000 sermons are preached in Britain each week, reaching millions of people across all denominations. The College of Preachers believes that the churches could make more of the opportunity this presents if preaching was more effective.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, said: "Lively, intelligent preaching is crucial for the life and growth of the Church." The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume, said: "The College of Preachers has a vital task. There is a greater need than ever for skilled preachers able to bring the gospel to life, who by their words and their lives are channels of God's love for a world in search of healing and hope."

Last year's winner was Fr William Anderson, 65, of St Mary's Cathedral, Aberdeen, and the only Roman Catholic to make the shortlist of 30. He preached in the final with four others at Southwark Cathedral.

The 30 shortlisted sermons and the winning sermon from 1995, by the Rev Barry Overend of Leeds, are available in *The Times Best Sermons of 1996* (Cassell, £9.99).

The closing date for entries is March 31, 1997. If tapes are submitted, sermons must be no longer than 15 minutes.

At Your Service, Weekend, page 11

THE TIMES

Preacher of the Year

Organised by the College of Preachers

Preachers are invited to put themselves forward for *The Times*/College of Preachers Preacher of the Year Award 1997. The winner will be presented with a specially commissioned sculpture for display in his or her church and will have their sermon published in The Times. Runners-up will also receive an award to mark their achievement. Entrants can submit notes or complete sermons, but no more than 2,000 words in total please. Tapes will also be accepted. Congregations or a member of a congregation may also nominate a preacher, but only if their permission is obtained first.

PREACHER OF THE YEAR NOMINATION FORM

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Send your sermon to:
Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

DENZIL McNEELANCE

Sculptor Rosalind Stracey with her sculpture for the Preacher of the Year trophy. This year, recorded as well as a written sermons are acceptable

Credo

Late, late show can run until the end of time

The Rev Barry Overend

AS four-letter words go, "late" is pretty inoffensive. Yet in some contexts it bristles with difficulties. Take the well-known lines from *Hark! The Herald-Angels Sing*:

Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb.

It has always struck me as odd that it is the second line which is regarded as controversial — the virgin birth and all that — whereas the first line is taken at face value and sung as if "late" was not the problem that it actually is.

Strictly speaking we can only meaningfully use the term "late" if we know to what timescale we are working. A 9pm arrival at the theatre is late for a show that finishes an hour later, but it is early for a new year's party which runs on way beyond midnight.

Undoubtedly the New Testament writers thought that time was running out. St Peter wrote: "The end of all things is upon us." From that perspective he could certainly claim that Christ was late arriving on the scene. However, the New Testament expectation of an imminent end proved to be mistaken, as have all subsequent predictions. How much time, then, do we have? Scientists estimate that the sun will probably burn up the Earth in five thousand million years. Against such a vast backdrop, undreamed of by any of the biblical writers, it is at the very least misleading to say that Christ arrived "late in time".

The fact that our perspective on time differs so radically from the biblical view has important implications for our appraisal of contemporary development within the Church. Those who opposed any revision of doctrine, ethics and ministry often appeal to tradition. They make much of what they see as nearly 2,000 years of consistent teaching and practice. Their underlying assumption is that it is a bit late now to change things. Yet, seen in the context of five thousand million years, a couple of millennia is merely the blinking of an eye.

I was prompted to think along these lines by a friend's remark that Christianity seemed to be on its last legs. He meant that so much of the tradition was being undermined. There is liturgical, moral and doctrinal confusion. The Bible is being treated just like any other book. The Christian religion is being treated just like any other religion and its clergy are more concerned with politics than with prayer.

But the same scenario can be viewed from a more positive angle. Searching for the truth is being given priority over adhering to tradition. Social awareness and action are complementing personal purity and prayer. Honest doubt is taking its proper place alongside firm conviction. Interfaith dialogue is replacing arrogant dogmatism and the Bible is being approached with intelligence, not with idolatry. These are all signs of a faith which is taking a few hesitant steps forward. Learning to walk often gives the appearance of imminent collapse. It is not necessarily because it is on its last legs that Christianity appears to be stumbling. It could be that it is only just beginning to find its feet. For far from being late in time, it is early days yet.

☐ *The Rev Barry Overend is Vicar of St Chad's, Far Headingley, Leeds, and won the Preacher of the Year Award in 1995*

Lawrence awards

FRANCES LAWRENCE will help to pick the winners of the citizenship awards set up in memory of her husband, the headmaster murdered outside his school in December 1995 (Richard Ford writes).

The young people honoured for outstanding achievement in helping their communities in law-and-order initiatives will be able to use the Philip Lawrence Memorial Award scheme emblem plus a prize of up to £1,000. The first awards ceremony, in December, will draw attention to efforts to combat vandalism, racial harassment and drug abuse.

In a consultation paper published yesterday, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, proposed that the awards be primarily for those aged 11 to 20. The scheme, to be launched in March, will operate in England, Wales and Scotland.

Ethnic balance for Bosnia Cabinet

FROM REUTER IN SARAJEVO

BOSNIA'S inter-ethnic parliament appointed a Cabinet yesterday at its first full session, approving nominations for the ministries that make up the country's weak central Government.

The Council of Ministers proposed by Bosnia's collective presidency was unopposed by the 42-member House of Representatives, elected in national polls in September, and only one deputy abstained. The Council of Ministers, or Cabinet, is led by two co-chairmen, Haris Silajdzic, a Muslim and former Bosnian Prime Minister, and Boro Bosic, a Serb.

Jadranko Prlic, a Croat who served for a time as Bosnia's Foreign Minister, kept his post in the new Cabinet. Another Muslim, Hasan Muratovic, the former Prime Minister, was named Minister of Foreign Trade, and a Serb, Spasoje Albijanic, will serve as Minister of Communications. Each minister has two deputies and the posts are distributed equally among the three national communities. The council, which primarily will handle issues touching on foreign relations, serves as a weak central authority ruling over Bosnia's autonomous Serb and Muslim-Croat territories.

Earlier, former enemies sat uncomfortably across an aisle and listened to speeches from all three members of the collective presidency in a museum room formerly reserved for aquariums and snakes in natural history exhibits.

"Now the real work must start," Michael Steiner, deputy to the international High Representative to Bosnia, told the deputies in a speech. Bosnian voters "expect you to get the country back on track," he added. "They expect you to provide them with peaceful, decent living conditons."

Protesters spurn Milosevic concession

FROM ANTHONY LOYD IN BELGRADE

THOUSANDS of pro-democracy demonstrators crowding Belgrade city centre yesterday failed to be placated by President Milosevic's decision to give way, in part at least, on some of their local election demands.

In a carefully worded letter sent to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Milan Milutinovic, the Serbian Foreign Minister, conceded that the opposition coalition had won nine local councils in Belgrade during November's elections. Crucially, though, the letter made no concession on the regime's defeat in the capital's policy-making assembly vote or its losses in other towns.

Furious opposition leaders from the "Zajedno" coalition branded the letter as no more than a political deception, labelled Mr Milosevic a criminal, said they would boycott parliament and called upon the thousands of protesters attending the Belgrade rally to continue the protest.

To crashing chants of "victory, victory", Vuk Draskovic, leader of the coalition, addressing the crowd in Knez Mihail Square, launched his most vitriolic attack so far on the regime. "Milutinovic's letter is lies and trickery," he told the demonstrators. "There is not a word in it on the city Mayor and assembly.

"Milosevic is leading Serbia back into international isolation, so that he can keep a hold on his terror mafia regime. His Government has become a base for criminals and terrorists. This is our city, and nobody should tell us where we can and cannot walk."

The crowds roared back their approval of Mr Draskovic's request to get all of Belgrade's citizens to turn off their state-controlled radio channels and join them on the streets to "peacefully and legally 'deblockade' the city".

The Serbs call it the "egg revolution" after the thousands of eggs thrown at government buildings.

If anything, the demonstrations are increasing in size as they enter their seventh week in more than 40 towns across Serbia. Arrayed against the clumsy brutishness of the state apparatus, whose weapons include a vast police force, controlled media and unbridled legal powers, is an alliance of Serbia's most educated and free-thinking elite. The addition to this force of the Serbian Orthodox Church two days ago — as well as the army's muted ambivalence — has given the protesters a boost because many of the country people who form the base of Mr Milosevic's support are religious.

Although some Western powers believe Mr Milosevic to be the only man powerful enough to maintain the Dayton peace in Bosnia, his credibility is being called increasingly into question by the worsening unrest in Serbia. "The international community may have once supported Milosevic as they thought he was the key to Dayton working," Veran Martic, chief editor of Belgrade's renegade B92 radio said. "But this consistent and lasting protest shows he cannot even control his own in Serbia. How can he possibly control the Bosnian Serbs? Even their leadership support the protests."

YANNIS BEHRAKIS/REUTER

A Serb shouts and rings a handbell in protest in Belgrade yesterday as the opposition demonstrations against the regime continued

Surge in Russian HIV cases

Moscow: Some 1,031 Russians tested HIV-positive last year, more than the total number reported since the Aids virus was first registered in the country ten years ago, the Heath Ministry said yesterday (Richard Beeston writes).

About 80 per cent of the new cases were drug users. Experts have warned that the number of infected people could rise dramatically due to ignorance about the disease, the collapse of health care and the increase in drug use.

Death house

Brussels: Arsonists have burnt down the house in southern Belgium where police found the remains of two girls allegedly kidnapped by Marc Dutroux, the paedophile murder suspect.

Airbus inquiry

Paris: Bernard Ziegler, a former Airbus technical director, has been placed under formal investigation for involuntary manslaughter over the crash of an A320 in which 87 people died in eastern France in 1992.

Now and then: a current edition and 50 years ago

Suspicious Kohl snubs party as 'Spiegel' turns 50

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BERLIN

GERMANY'S most irreverent news magazine and a constant thorn in the side of postwar governments, *Der Spiegel*, celebrates its fiftieth birthday this weekend. A grand party planned for next week will include a sprinkling of prominent political victims — but not Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, who has repeatedly refused to be interviewed by the Hamburg-based weekly.

The founder, long-time editor and guiding spirit of the magazine is Rudolf Augstein. As a 23-year-old in British-occupied Hamburg he managed to gain the publishing licence for the magazine, originally entitled *Diese Woche* (This Week). He renamed the magazine *Der Spiegel* (The Mirror) and set out to make it a "leading weapon in the defence of democracy". The British occupation authorities were not always happy with Herr Augstein's aggressive journalism but at least one sympathetic officer helped him keep the magazine alive.

Herr Augstein gave *Spiegel* a leftish tilt and recruited investigative journalists who broke some of the biggest scandals in modern Germany. When he published details of Nato exercises in 1962, police arrested him. That unleashed a debate about the freedom of the press and led to the resignation of then Defence Minister, Franz Josef Strauss.

Strauss, who ended his career as the right-wing premier of Bavaria, remained a constant butt of the magazine. The feud has continued even after Strauss's death: *Spiegel* has closely followed the business activities of his son Max and the politics of his daughter, Monika, a minister in the Bavarian Cabinet.

Herr Augstein's ability to maintain protracted personal feuds gave the magazine its polemical edge but also drew criticism about its lapses in taste. But *Spiegel* always stood out in the bland media landscape of Germany in which journalists and politicians all too often seem to enjoy a cosy intimacy. It broke a number of key stories including the Flick affair which exposed secret corporate funding of political parties.

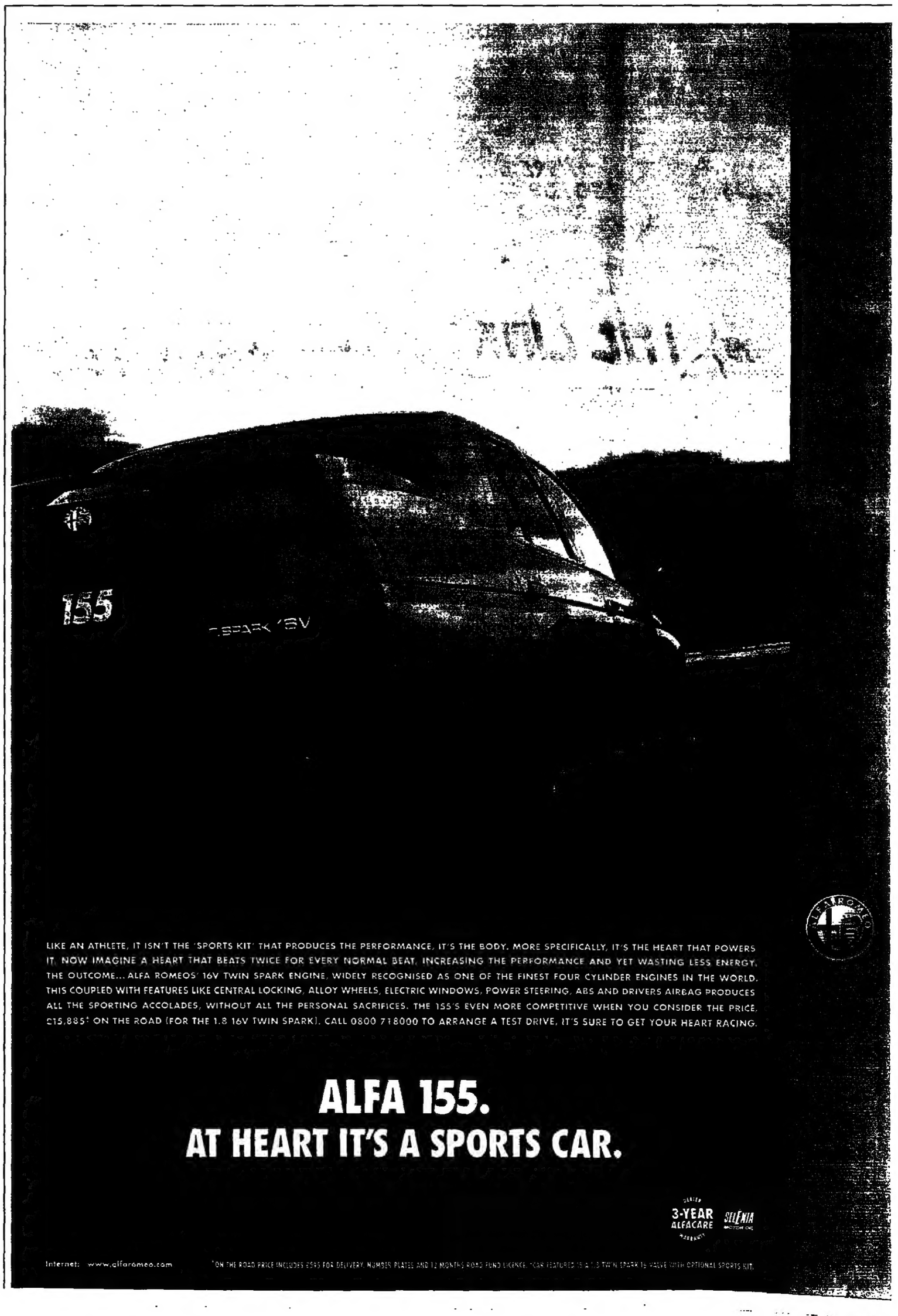
Many ministers have lost their jobs as a result of articles in *Spiegel*, read avidly every Monday morning. Most Cabinet ministers, in fact, obtain advance copies at the weekend to give them time to take legal advice. One regional minister, Uwe Barschel, accused by the magazine of launching a dirty tricks campaign against a rival in the 1980s, later committed suicide.

Herr Augstein — in regular contact with the present editor, Stefan Aust — continues to write essays, commentaries and cover stories. He has moved rightwards over the years and has become a sharp critic of the Maastricht treaty.

His relationship with the political elite remains tense. Herr Kohl is convinced that the magazine is trying to manipulate opinion against him since there have been many cover stories announcing "the twilight of the Chancellor". *Spiegel* recently tried to correct the balance with a flattering profile but the German leader remained unmoved.

In recent months the *Spiegel*'s legendary insider accounts of Cabinet sessions have dried up. The reason in part is the growing competition from *Focus* magazine, set up in Munich three years ago.

Focus has given politicians an alternative Monday morning outlet for leaking information. *Spiegel*'s circulation has held up well, however, if only because *Focus* articles are big on headlines and short on information.



هكذا من الأصل

Christmas card bombs prompt FBI terror alert

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

THE FBI's anti-terrorism task force yesterday warned Americans to beware of bulky envelopes bearing Egyptian postmarks after the discovery of nine bombs hidden inside musical Christmas cards.

Four bombs went to the Washington bureau of an Arabic newspaper, a fifth was found at the sorting office before it was delivered to the bureau and four more were addressed to the parole officer of a prison holding an Islamic terrorist who bombed the World Trade Centre in New York.

The ninth bomb was discovered yesterday at a sorting office in Kansas and was also addressed to the parole officer at nearby Fort Leavenworth. Postal workers had been on the alert for more bombs after the FBI warning.

An FBI official who urged caution in handling mail from Egypt said investigators had no idea if all the letter bombs had been found or if more were circulating in the postal system or waiting to be opened somewhere. The FBI had no suspects.

The identical bombs were postmarked Alexandria and had been sent on December 21. All were in plain white envelopes, 5½ in by 6½ in, with computer-generated addresses and no return address. The bombs were disguised inside musical Christmas cards and primed to explode when the cards were opened.

The first card was discovered by Dana Sandarusi, Washington correspondent for *al-Hayat*, which is owned by a member of the Saudi Royal Family and published in London. Initially suspicious when he saw the Egyptian stamps, Mr Sandarusi opened the envelope gingerly and stopped when he saw wiring and plastic explosive inside.

The US postal service delivered two more letter bombs to the bureau by the second post, an absurd security lapse given that the alarm had been raised. This led to a complete evacuation of the National Press Building, which houses dozens of domestic and foreign news organisations.

FBI agents were trying to draw a connection between *al-Hayat* and the bombs sent to the federal prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Attention focused on Mohammed Salameh, who is serving a life sentence at the prison for his role in the World Trade Centre bombing, in which six were killed and more than 1,000 injured.

Another inmate is Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind Egyptian cleric described as ring-leader of a group of Middle Eastern terrorists who were sentenced a year ago for plotting to bomb buildings and tunnels in Manhattan and to kidnap American politicians.

DAVID SILVERMAN/REUTERS

An Israeli woman waits with her children until her mobile home is completed at Beit El on the West Bank

Soldier 'planned attack on mosque'

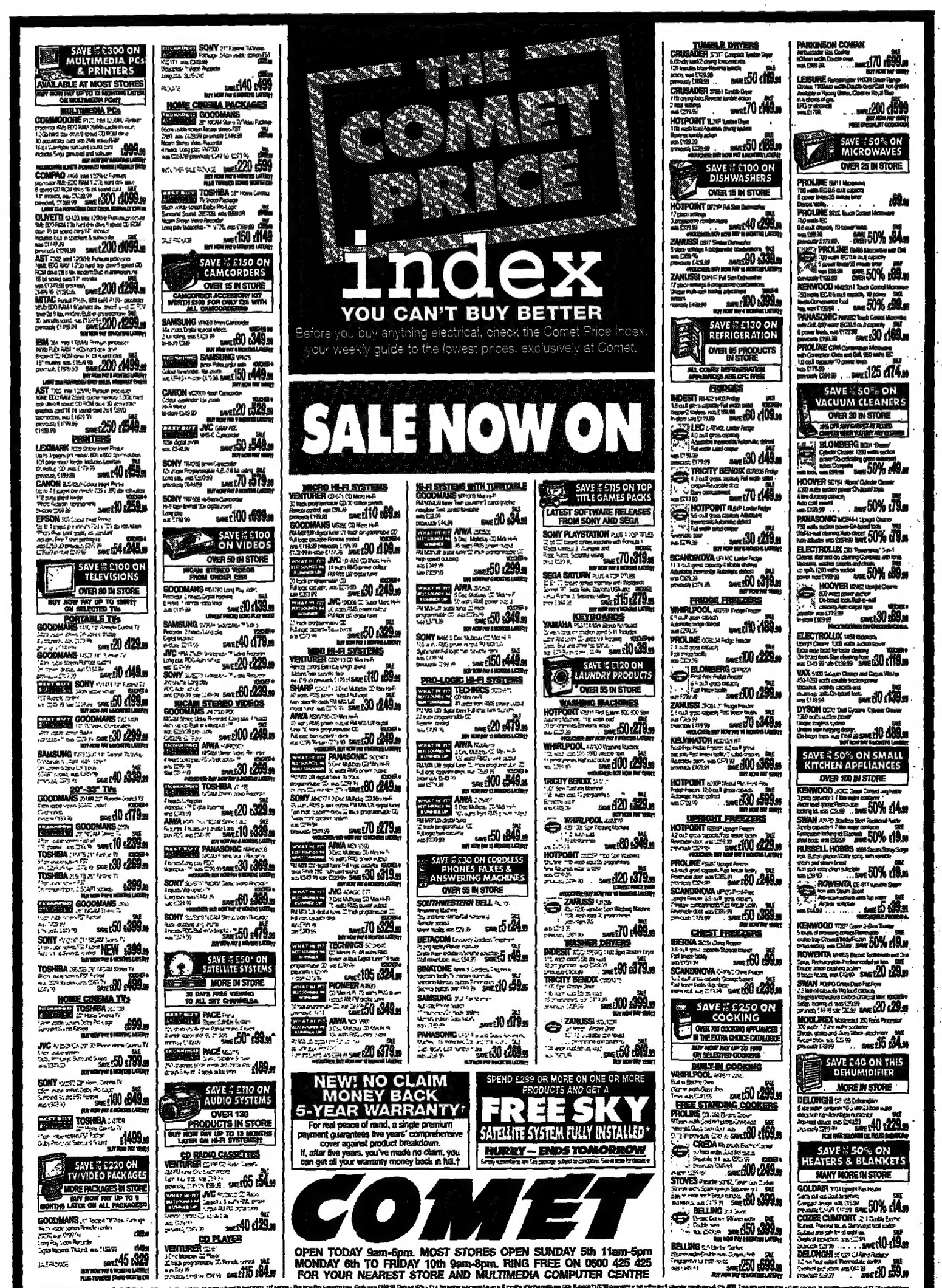
FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli soldier who earlier this week fired on Palestinian shoppers in Hebron was yesterday ordered to undergo psychiatric tests. At the same time his lawyer has reportedly urged him to plead not guilty on the grounds of insanity.

But Noam Friedman, 22, a private, claims he is mentally stable and opened fire in central Hebron on Wednesday in the hope of scuttling an Israeli troop withdrawal from most of the West Bank city. No one was killed.

Yediot Ahronot said Private Friedman had also planned other attacks on Arabs. The newspaper said he had intended to steal an armoured personnel carrier, drive it to an Arab village and open fire. He also apparently spoke of attacking the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem, Islam's third-holiest shrine.

A second soldier, Yuval Jibli, 21, who was detained on suspicion that he knew of Private Friedman's plans, has been released.



Cyprus missile deal threatens power balance

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

CYPRUS is close to signing a contract with Russia for the supply of surface-to-air missiles. The purchase will dramatically alter the balance of power with Turkey, which has 30,000 troops in the north of the divided island, a government source said yesterday.

The decision by the Greek Cypriots to acquire a missile system comes despite repeated misgivings by Britain, the United States and the United Nations about the military build-up on the island. Turkey has objected strongly to the purchase, and has hinted at pre-emptive strikes.

"It will shift the balance of power in the sense that the Turkish Air Force will not be allowed to control the air space unchallenged, but we will never use them unless attacked," the source said.

The Greek Cypriots, whose army of 11,500 is heavily outnumbered by Turkish forces on the island, insist the Russian S300 surface-to-air missile system is intended solely to prevent Turkish expansionism.

Privately, they admit the missiles will serve as a "very good bargaining chip" in negotiations to solve the Cyprus problem. They also concede that part of the strategy is to up the military ante in order to gain international attention. "It will make the necessity for a resolution all the more urgent," the source said.

When he visited Cyprus last month, Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, described the number of troops and the array of weapons on the island as "absurdly, dangerously high" and appealed for a halt to further arms procurements.

The decision to buy the missiles was taken by a ministerial commission on Monday. Media reports here said the deal would be signed next week by Cypriot officials and representatives of the Russian state-controlled Rosvoorouzhenie company. It could take several months for their delivery.

Yesterday, Turkey and the breakaway Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus signed a $250 million (£148 million) economic accord. Necmettin Erbakan, the Turkish Prime Minister, said at the signing ceremony, attended by Dervis Eroglu, the Turkish Cypriot Prime Minister, that the aid would benefit tourism, education and industry in northern Cyprus. Only Turkey recognises the breakaway state.

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Pakistan plans to entrench political power of generals

FROM ZAHID HUSSAIN IN KARACHI

THE political role of Pakistan's military is to become enshrined following the interim administration's agreement to set up a national security council after parliamentary elections set for February 3.

The proposed eight-member council will comprise the President, the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Defence Minister, Chief of the Joint Staff Committee and the chiefs of the army, air force and navy. The council will function as a super Cabinet and dictate policy in the foreign, defence and economic spheres.

A report published in Pakistan's biggest English-language daily, *The Dawn*, quoted senior government sources as saying that President Leghari had given his consent and that the council was likely to be formed in the next few weeks.

The move comes as Nasrullah Babaar, Interior Minister in the ousted Government of Benazir Bhutto, was charged in connection with the death of Ms Bhutto's brother Murtaza last September. Mr Babaar, who has not been arrested yet, has denied the accusations.

The interim rulers have also abandoned 56 development projects worth millions that were initiated by the Bhutto Government. The programmes included parks, monuments, a prime minister's secretariat and a convention centre.

With political turmoil growing, President Leghari is also expected to make an early announcement on a new constitution.

Government sources justified the creation of the council by saying it would give the military its due role and end the potential for conflict between the military and the elected government. "It would create harmony between the different organs of the state," a senior official said.

Pakistan's military has directly ruled the country for 25 out of the 50 years since the creation of the country, and it has long been demanding a constitutional role in politics. Despite the return to democracy in 1988 the military has continued to cast a shadow over the political scene. Informally, the army chief has been seen as a member of the troika of power, along with the President and Prime Minister. The generals also have a strong say on issues related to foreign and defence politics. President Leghari's proposed constitutional role for the military will ensure that they become a dominant force.

The national security council will monitor the economic situation as Islamabad faces its worst financial crisis. Economic mismanagement was one of the key factors that led to Mr Leghari's dismissal of Ms Bhutto's Government. The army backed him because it considered the economic crisis a threat to national security.

Although Islamabad has averted the threat of a default on its external loan repayments with the help of the International Monetary Fund, the IMF's support has come with a condition that the administration adheres to a tight fiscal policy. President Leghari and the military want to ensure that any future government would not deviate from the economic reforms stipulated by the IMF.

News reports here suggest that Mian Nawaz Sharif, a former Prime Minister and the strongest contender for power, has agreed to Mr Leghari's power-sharing formula. This indicates that power will only be transferred to an elected government after it has agreed to abide by the rules laid down by the President and the generals.

Many observers, however, fear that the proposed political role for the military would undermine the sovereignty of parliament.

Imran rivals exploit 'love child' claim

BY ZAHID HUSSAIN

THE political aspirations of Imran Khan, the former Pakistani cricket star, may suffer a big blow with the threat by British heiress Sita White to take him to court to prove his paternity of her child Tyrian.

The issue has provided Mr Khan's main political rivals with an effective propaganda device to undermine his increasing popularity among the conservative urban middle classes.

Many Pakistani national newspapers yesterday reproduced Miss White's interview with *The Express* on their front pages.

At a news conference this week Mr Khan denied Miss White's claim that Tyrian was his child. He alleged that Miss White — daughter of the late Lord White — had been paid £50,000 by the paper for the story. He questioned why she had made her claim at this stage and claimed that political opponents were using dirty tricks against him. The claims that Mr Khan has a love child first surfaced soon after the announcement of his engagement to Jemima Goldsmith, daughter of Sir James Goldsmith, in 1995. The claims of an illegitimate child did not make any adverse impact at that time but Miss White's statement would certainly affect his position in an election.

Mr Khan formed his Movement for Justice last year with a promise to provide a clean and honest leadership. The movement has attracted educated urban professionals who are disenchanted with the corruption that has dominated Pakistan's political life.

Mr Khan has emerged as the main rival to Nawaz Sharif, the former Prime Minister, who he is challenging for seats in Lahore and Abbottabad. His image as a social crusader has bolstered his popularity as a sporting hero.

ARMANDO FRANCA/AP

Egide Gatanazi, who was yesterday sentenced to death in Rwanda for genocide

Hutus sentenced to death

Kigali: Two Hutus were sentenced to death in a Rwandan court yesterday for genocide and crimes against humanity.

State-run radio said Deogratias Bizimana, a former medical assistant, and Egide Gatanazi, a former administrator, had 15 days to appeal. Both men were tried for four hours on December 27 before three judges in the southeastern town of Kibungo where they were accused of organising massacres. They pleaded not guilty but had no defence lawyers. Executions in Rwanda are carried out by firing squad.

The convicted men were the first suspects to go on trial under a genocide law passed last year. About 90,000 Rwandans are in jail accused of taking part in killing an estimated 800,000 minority Tutsis and Hutu moderates.

Gerard Gahima, Deputy Justice Minister, said: "Under our law it is permissible for people to be tried without lawyers. If people think you can sweep the genocide of one million people under the carpet because there are no lawyers, they can think again." *(Reuter)*

Kruger park lions devour mother and child

FROM RAY KENNEDY IN JOHANNESBURG

A MOTHER and child were attacked and eaten by lions in the Kruger National Park, South Africa's main game reserve. The victims were among a group of impoverished Mozambican illegal immigrants attempting to cross the wildlife park into South Africa to find jobs.

Every month hundreds of Mozambicans cross illegally through the park, the size of Wales. It is one of their key routes even though soldiers patrol the border and park rangers keep watch.

The border, outside the park, used to be protected by a lethal electric fence erected by South Africa's apartheid regime to keep out then African National Congress guerrillas, but the current has been switched off for some years.

Ben Pretorius, game ranger at the Punda Maria Rest Camp at the northern end of the park, said yesterday that the group of Mozambicans had been waiting in the bush near a tarred road for the moon to rise before continuing their journey. But they were surprised by a bull elephant and scattered in panic. Before they could regroup, they heard the screams of the woman and child. The fearful survivors stayed in hiding for the rest of the night and in the morning recounted their ordeal to a party of tourists.

Mr Pretorius said he found the remains of the woman and child several hours later. He estimated that at least 300 Mozambicans a month tried to cross the park. "Many more may be killed who we don't even know about," he said.

Several years ago a pride of lions was hunted down and shot by park rangers when it became clear that the beasts were stalking Mozambicans trying to cross the park and had turned into man-eaters.

☐ **Dar es Salaam:** A lion ate a family of four on New Year's Day in a village west of the Tanzanian capital. The Kiswahili daily *Uhuru* said the victims were a man, his wife and their two children. The lion was still at large and being hunted. *(AFP)*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gambia returns to civilian control

Banjul: President Jammeh's party won a majority in The Gambia's new parliament yesterday after elections that complete a return to civilian rule in the small West African nation after his 1994 military coup.

Partial results from Thursday's poll, broadcast by state radio and TV, showed that his Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction had 36 of the assembly's 49 seats. With four fifths of results declared, the main opposition United Democratic Party of Ousainou Darboe had six seats and the opposition National Reconciliation Party of Hamat Bah, two. *(Reuter)*

Seoul peace offer

Seoul: A nuclear pact with North Korea will be resuscitated next week in an attempt to repair the political damage from September's incursion of a North Korean submarine, Seoul officials said. *(Reuter)*

Bomb kills four

Srinagar: A bomb planted in a scooter taxi exploded near the home of Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister of India's troubled Jammu and Kashmir state, killing four people, the police said. *(Reuter)*

Cooking can kill

Peking: The incidence of lung cancer among Chinese women aged 40 to 59 is catching up with that of men, according to a Shanghai health survey that blamed cooking oil fumes for the increase. *(AFP)*

Oil slick threat

Tokyo: An oil slick threatened Japan's western coast after a Russian-registered tanker broke in two, safety officials said. Heavy oil had gushed from the *Nakhodka* northeast of the Oki Islands. *(Reuter)*

Camp is closed

Hong Kong: The colony has closed one of its last two big detention camps for Vietnamese migrants. About 1,000 Vietnamese were moved from Whitehead detention centre to High Island camp. *(Reuter)*

Coin find starts Australian row

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

NEW evidence suggesting that Australia may have been discovered by the Portuguese in the 1520s was disputed last night after a row about the origin of a coin, left, found near Melbourne (Roger Maynard writes).

A beachcomber with a metal detector came across the coin, believed to be a 500-year-old Portuguese *real*, buried on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula about three months ago.

The Victoria State Museum verified the country of origin and the age of the coin. However, Ken Downie, a Melbourne numismatist, said that the coin was not Portuguese, was not early 16th century and was almost certainly counterfeit. He said it came from Spain and probably was struck about 1580.

Portuguese historians have long speculated that their navigator ancestors reached Australia early in the sixteenth century.

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Britons relish Chile wine boom

BY GABRIELLA GAMINI
SOUTH AMERICA CORRESPONDENT

CHILEAN wine exports are enjoying a boom. In 1995 Chilean winemakers exported $150 million (£92 million) worth and last year it shot up to $280 million, with 10 per cent going to Britain. More than 26 million bottles of Chilean red and white reached the shops in Britain last year.

"We have have become popular in Europe and the United States. But we are already looking to sell to a bigger market in Asia where they are just beginning to integrate wines into their habits," said Rodrigo Alvarado, director of Chile's main wine export control body.

Sebastian Ruiz, who makes chardonnay at the Vina Gracia winery in the Cachapoal Valley, calls himself "a new winemaker". Vina Gracia's 1996 Four Rivers Chardonnay and 1995 Four Rivers Cabernet Sauvignon were selected last Christmas as "star buys" by *The Times* wine critic.

The secret of Chile's success derives from the 15 hours of sunshine during dry summer months. Winemakers say the climate is ideal, offering hot days and cool nights and very little rain, with the addition of fertile valleys that stretch between the Andes and Pacific Ocean. Señor Ruiz put it down to a "miracle" of nature. "We can have a wine ready in less than three months, so we always have young wines on the market quickly and we can guarantee their fresh fruity quality," he said.

Leading article, page 17

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Punters ride their luck as floods sweep western US

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

FLOODS raged throughout the western United States yesterday, forcing many thousands to evacuate their homes, trapping more than 2,000 visitors and staff in Yosemite national park, but failing to stop the action in Reno where gambling continued in sandbagged casinos.

A string of torrential storms that began last week brought flooding, mudslides and power failures. Rivers burst their banks and roads were inundated in Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington state and northern California. At least 17 deaths are blamed on the bad weather.

Four towns in northern California with a total population of 95,000 were evacuated on the orders of sheriff's deputies after an embankment of the rain-swollen Feather River collapsed. Authorities feared that the banks downstream would give way as well. Eighteen evacuation centres were opened for the residents of Marysville, Yuba City, Linda and Olivehurst as they jammed the roads to make their escape.

Police patrolled the empty streets overnight. "They told us to hit the road and we did just that," said Freida Williams of Yuba City as she rested on a camp bed at a Red Cross shelter.

Long queues of cars snaked out of Yuba City, past recreation grounds and picnic spots that had been submerged in depths of up to 30ft. Police said that the break in the Feather River's bank appeared to be twice as big as one ten years ago when 40 sq miles were flooded, including all of Linda and parts of Olivehurst.

More than 6,000 of the evacuees headed for safety to Beale air force base, home of the U2 spy plane, 40 miles north of Sacramento. They included elderly patients moved from a convalescent home and hundreds of children. The air force opened up a gym, a skating rink and hangars to accommodate the influx. Rows of cars were parked on the flight line, many laden with bedding, photographs and other mementos hastily gathered up in the flight from threatened homes.

In Nevada, the normally placid Truckee River overflowed, sending a torrent of water through homes and businesses in Reno. At the airport, several airliners were stranded in water up to their engine cowlings. Some hotel casinos were forced to close for the first time in memory, but others remained open.

In Yosemite, new year party guests were still trapped in two hotels with nowhere to go and nothing to do but play board games, read old newspapers and watch the Merced River surging by, flooding all roads into the park.

It was the second setback for 300 of the stranded tourists who had waited more than a year to get in. They had won a draw for tickets for New Year's Eve 1995, but the park was closed by the budget impasse in Washington so their trip was put off until now. The hotels reported that everyone was safe and there was plenty to eat and drink.

Seventy counties in five states have been declared disaster areas since the storms began swamping the region with snow and rain on Boxing Day.

There are likely to be appeals to President Clinton for federal aid to help those whose homes, businesses and crops have been destroyed. The weekend forecast was for dry weather at last.

DE TELEGRAAF

Some of the top Dutch amateur skaters train for today's Elfstedentocht, the 15th race in the 88-year history of the gruelling 160-mile event

Rare skating marathon warms Dutch hearts

FROM MARK FULLER IN AMSTERDAM

THE Netherlands will come to a stop today for the rarely run Elfstedentocht, the legendary Frisian "11-cities" skating marathon which is one of the most gruelling sporting events in the world.

This skating-crazy nation has been waiting 11 years for a freeze to provide sufficient ice to carry more than 16,000 skaters along the 160-mile route through waterways and lakes linking 11 towns and villages in the northern province of Friesland. Today's marathon will be only the 15th race in the event's 88-year history.

One million spectators are expected for the start at 5.30am and the rest of the nation will be glued to live television coverage of the day-long marathon. Such is the passion for the race that parliament went into recess during the last two races in 1985 and 1986, and Queen Beatrix cut short a foreign holiday.

To qualify for the race skaters either have to hold a Dutch marathon skater's licence or be members of the Elfstedentocht club. The organisation also holds a special lottery for additional racers. Funding comes from a mixture of provincial government subsidy, local sponsorship and broadcasting rights.

Attention will focus on the 300 top amateur marathon skaters. These fanatics, all Dutch and including dairy farmers and a police detective, will be released first from the steel cages at the start of the tour in Leeuwarden, the Frisian capital.

They first have to run almost a mile before donning their skates and climbing on to the ice in darkness. They are expected to complete the course in around seven hours, averaging almost 19 miles an hour.

Although there is no prize money for the winner, who receives a silver cup, the first skater to cross the finishing line will almost certainly become a guilder-millionaire through sponsorship deals. The 16,000 other "tour skaters", have to finish by midnight to receive a silver medal.

Once away from the lights in the towns, there is no special floodlighting. Some skaters carry hand-held torches. Both groups of racers are motivated purely by the event's mythical status.

"There is no other marathon like it in the world. It's not called the race of races for nothing," said Evert van Benthem, the winner in 1985 and 1986. After making a grave error last year when they misread weather conditions, the organising committee anticipated the freeze this week.

The three Frisian words, *It giet oan* (it's going ahead), were spoken on Thursday, although the ice on some parts of the course had not yet thickened to the required 6in.

Firemen have been working round the clock sawing chunks of ice out of disused canals and transplanting them to holes in the course.

Photograph, page 20

New batch of Nixon outbursts released

BY IAN BRODIE

JUST as Americans are despairing of ethics violations and alleged abuses of public trust by their politicians, the voice of Richard Nixon has come back to haunt them.

His profane, uncompromising words were revealed again yesterday with publication of the latest excerpts from the Watergate tapes made available by the National Archives.

The year was 1971 and Mr Nixon was listing the job requirements for his new commissioner for the Internal Revenue Service. "I want to be sure he's a ruthless son of a bitch, that he will do what he's told, that every income tax return I want to see, I see, that he will go after our enemies and not go after our friends," the President said, apparently oblivious that the Oval Office taping system he had installed was whirring away.

Nixon was bothered, he said, by what the "stinking little bastards" did at the IRS when the Democrats were in charge. He recalled that the Kennedys had ordered tax inspectors to go after him "for that goddamned house I bought". Now it was the Republican Nixon's turn and he wanted to know "when the Christ are they going to go after some Democrats?"

The man chosen to be the Nixon IRS patsy was Johnnie Walters, but he refused to go along with the plot when he was handed the famous "enemies list" and told to audit their tax returns. "I was shocked," he told *The Washington Post*, which published the latest Nixon tapes. He warned John Dean, the President's counsel and emissary, that targeting the tax returns of political enemies "would make Watergate look like a Sunday school picnic".

He put the list in an envelope and tucked it away until congressional investigators bent on Nixon's impeachment came looking for it. As for Mr Walters, Nixon declared he was finished, a demotion the former commissioner is proud of to this day.

No Pension, No Life   Is this how life is going to be?

From our Business Editor

IT'S a recurring nightmare. It won't go away. Every wee[k] is the same.

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[Y]ou don't go out. [The] heating is turned [dow]n. But you still [can't] manage. You can't [go w]ithout food. Or [with]out paying your [bills].

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[I]t's a recurring nightmare. [I]t won't go away. Every [w]eek is the same.

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[You]'ve given up your [car.] New clothes. [Holida]ys. Your pet.

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won['t go away. Every week] is the same.

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go without food. Or without paying your bills.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

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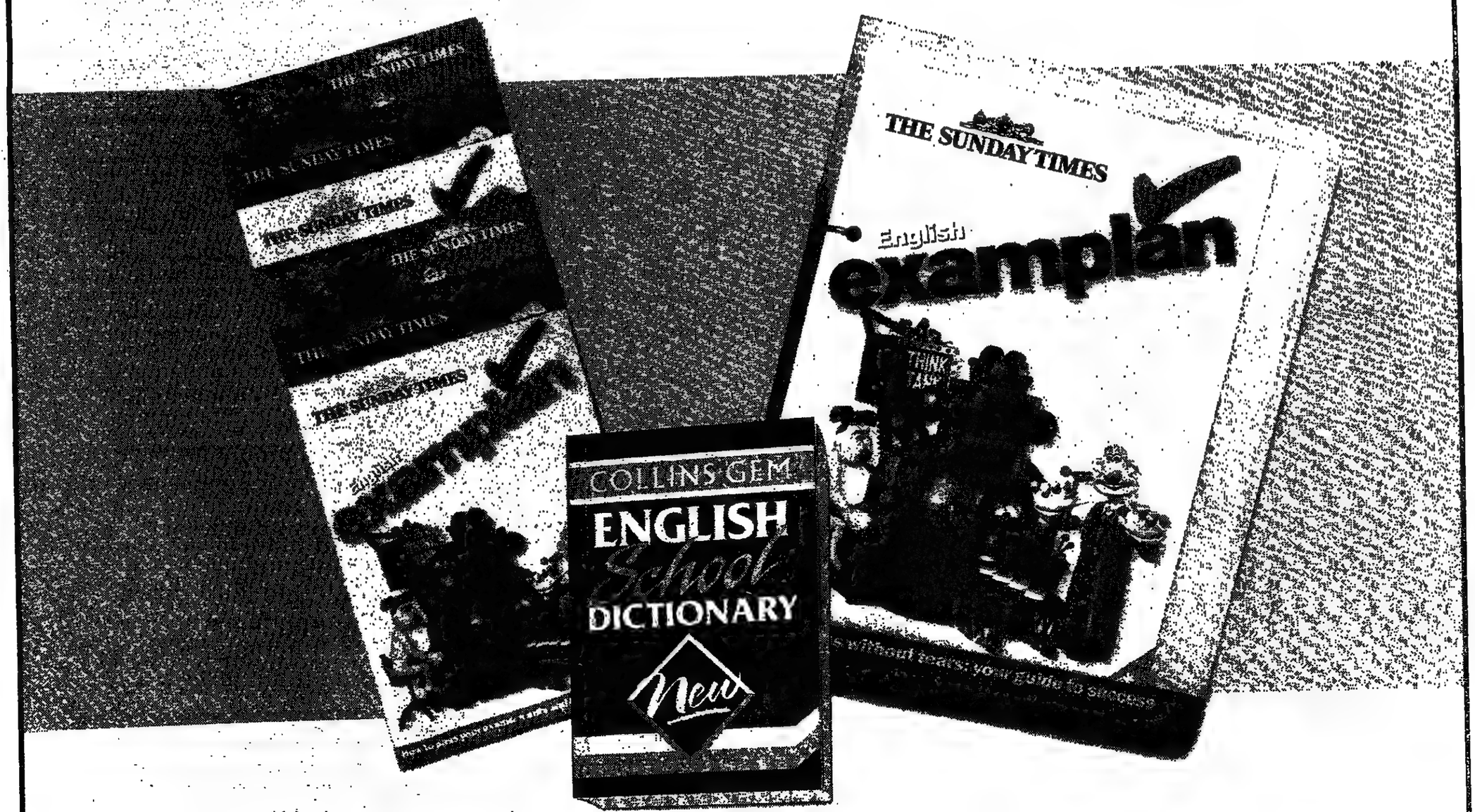

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THE SUNDAY TIMES *IS* THE SUNDAY PAPERS

British company in joint venture to police lawless jungle of Moscow

Firms in need of bodyguards call for Russian SAS

MOSCOW FILE
by RICHARD BEESTON

ASSEMBLE any group of Western businessmen in Moscow and within a few minutes the conversation usually turns to the dangers of working in the lawless world of modern Russia.

With daily accounts in the Russian press about the contract killings of bankers, traders and even the odd foreigner, security, or the lack of it, has become an issue few can afford to ignore.

Last year a British lawyer was shot dead in St Petersburg: he was hit by a stray bullet during an attempt on the life of a Russian mobster. In November, Paul Tatum, an American businessman, was shot dead by a contract killer in a Moscow underpass.

In most countries where law enforcement has broken down the next best thing to a policeman is private security, but in Russia choosing the right bodyguard can be a matter of life or death. Even though Tatum supposedly was protected by bodyguards, they did nothing to prevent his being shot 11 times in the back by a killer armed with a Kalashnikov rifle.

Increasingly, therefore, bankers, oil magnates and multinationals are turning to a discreet security firm with humble origins, whose main selling point is that it is staffed almost exclusively by former KGB special forces officers. Alpha, named after the Russian equivalent of the SAS, has teamed up with the British firm Defence Systems to form a joint venture of former Cold War enemies now making their money from fighting the mob. Alpha relies heavily on its fearsome reputation. The force first came to prominence when it spearheaded the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan by overthrowing and killing the Afghan leader in December 1979. It also carried out the attack on pro-independence demonstrators in Lithuania in 1991 and led the assault on the uprising in the Moscow White House in 1993.

"We started off with plenty of experience in special operations, but little knowledge of business practices," Igor Orekhov, a former KGB major who is now company director, said. "But in five years we have gone from guarding parking lots to protecting about 1,000 people. In five years of operating in the security business we have never had a client injured or killed."

"In some cases we have had criminals threatening clients on the street. That is when we call out our rapid reaction force, on call 24 hours a day. No one is bothered after that."

Icicle threat hangs over frozen city

AS temperatures in Moscow plunge to below -20C, a new and deadly threat is hanging over the capital's long-suffering population.

Aside from the dangers of cars skidding on icy roads, the most fearsome winter obstacles are the huge icicles that form below the roofs of every high-rise building in the city.

Last year several people were impaled by these monsters, which grow up to six feet long and weigh several pounds.

A Russian security firm's bodyguard squad takes part in an exercise. With extortion and the number of contract killings rising as law and order break down, such firms are thriving, especially in Moscow

Teacher and tycoon in palace revolt

IN THE cut-throat world of Kremlin politics Boris Berezovsky, one of the richest and most influential personalities in Moscow, rarely comes off second best.

But the slick entrepreneur and government aide may have met his match. His opponent is Nikolai Tchertkoff, an American schoolteacher of Russian descent, who has taken on the tycoon in a battle for one of Moscow's most famous landmarks, the Tchertkoff Mansion, an imposing 300-year-old building in the heart of the city.

The palace, which Mr Berezovsky's company Logovaz wants to develop with a South Korean firm into a casino or private club, was given to Moscow by Mr Tchertkoff's ancestors on the condition that it remain a public library.

"These people do not give a damn about books or culture, all they want to do is make money," said Mr Tchertkoff. "If Russia loses its culture, it will lose everything." Although initially his efforts were rebuffed by Logovaz and the municipality, his cause has suddenly taken off. He has even addressed parliament, the only non-member since Alexander Solzhenitsyn to do so.

Kohl visit to Yeltsin dogged by suspicion over Nato

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BERLIN

HELMUT KOHL, the German Chancellor, travels to Moscow today to take stock of the physical and political health of his friend, Boris Yeltsin, and assess the extent of Kremlin resistance to Nato's eastward expansion.

The German will be the first Western leader to see the convalescent Russian President; President Chirac will follow shortly.

The visit is tinged with more than a little anxiety. "Kohl has realised — earlier than most other leaders — that Yeltsin is going to come under incredible pressure this year because of the beginning of enlargement talks," a senior Western diplomat says. "Yeltsin's stamina, psychological bearing and political grip are very important."

President Yeltsin's erstwhile security chief, General Aleksandr Lebed, has criticised the Kremlin leader for allowing Russia to slip from superpower status. Nato's eastward enlargement, in the Russian view, will set in stone that now diminished global role. Mr Yeltsin, despite his relationship with Herr Kohl, seems powerless to stop the process; he is therefore vulnerable.

The two leaders were expected to discuss the broad contours of an agreement with Russia that, by emphasising the non-aggressive intentions of Nato, should give some support to President Yeltsin.

Yet there is still considerable Russian distrust not only of Nato but also of Germany's real motives. Enlargement of the European Union is aimed at extending Europe's wealth zone eastwards. That, and the Nato plans, add up in the view of many Russian observers to the creation of a buffer zone to shield Germany from an unstable Russia.

Recent speeches by Herr Kohl address the latent fears of the Germans — organised crime, the encroachment of the Russian mafia, migration from the East — and suggest that the concept of a buffer zone has quietly become a feature of German politics.

Certainly, economic figures indicate that Germany has replaced Russia as the predominant power in Central Europe. The Kohl-Yeltsin friendship thus has an uneasy edge. It is a relationship dogged with suspicion that Germany is profiting from Russian decline. For a Russian general staff, still using textbooks in which Germany is depicted as the main land-based military threat, Herr Kohl's many reassurances do not add up to much.

That is why Russia is intensifying pressure on, and espionage activity in, Eastern Europe.

Ex-breadwinner told to hand over dough

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID

A JUDGE in Barcelona made legal history yesterday by ordering a divorced man to work 12 hours every week for the next 12 years in his ex-wife's bakery as a penalty for failing to pay for their children's maintenance.

The man, known only as Francisco F.J., readily accepted the quixotic ruling as it enables him to clear his post-matrimonial debts without having to sell his small flat, his spartan furniture and his beloved piano.

The unusual solution was proposed in court by the ex-wife's lawyer, who claimed later that he had got the idea from "some American film" he had seen. Speaking on behalf of his client, whose name was released as Ana E.L., the lawyer said: "She is very happy with the solution as she hated the idea of having her ex-husband's property confiscated."

The problem began in 1994, when the couple divorced. Although Francisco F.J. agreed to pay his ex-wife a monthly sum as part of the settlement, he had not paid her a single peseta. His debts now stand at nearly £20,000. Although the couple have four children, only their 12-year-old daughter Cristina is still a minor. Part of the court's judgement lays down that the father, also a baker by profession, must teach his daughter the fine arts of making bread, cakes and chocolates.

The judge has made it clear that she would send for the bailiffs if Francisco F.J. failed to comply. "Full compensation will be deemed to have been made only on condition that he participates in the making of breads, pastries and chocolate for the full period laid down in the judgement, she said."

France rises in alarm to protect the baguette

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

THE French Government has intervened to protect the future of the humble baguette, a universal symbol of France as potent as berets and Beaujolais, from going decidedly stale.

Thousands of traditional bakers have gone out of business in recent years in the face of competition from industrial bread manufacturers and cut-price mass-produced supermarket breads.

Now, however, only professionally trained bakers who select their own flour, knead their own dough and bake the bread on the premises will maintain the right to describe themselves as *boulangers*. The measure, which was agreed earlier last year but took effect on January 1, aims to protect traditional artisans.

Thirty years ago France could boast 54,000 *boulangeries*. Since then, more than 20,00 have closed. Only three quarters of the bread baked in France is made by traditional methods and officials estimate that almost 5,000 establishments which do not conform with the new regulations will be forced to change their shop signs to omit the word *boulangerie*.

In recent years, many so-called bakers stopped making their own dough and started using an oven-ready factory substitute which they then baked. Unfortunately, this ersatz baguette turns hard quickly and bears little resemblance to the real thing.

Although the consumption of bread in France is still well ahead of Britain, where 70 per cent is produced by big manufacturers, it has dropped sharply. Since the war, French consumption has dropped by half and France now rates only tenth in the world.

Poland, which has no industrial bread makers, tops the world league for bread sales. French bakers, who welcomed the new law this week, hope that it will bring back pride in the baguette and will encourage sales.

Several "pseudo-*boulangers*," angered by the new law, are demanding how they should now describe themselves. For some, a *boulangerie* is simply a place where bread is sold.

Despite the current vogue in France for specialty breads, most traditional bakers find that a simple but delicious *baguette*, still warm from the oven, is the best way to hold their own against mass-produced supermarket products, even if the latter do sell for as little as a franc each. Experts agree that it is impossible to produce a "real *baguette*" for less than two francs.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

FROCK SHOCK
Revealed tomorrow in The Sunday Times Magazine: the identity of Gianni Versace's new supermodel
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VISUAL ART: **John Russell Taylor** welcomes a modest, but pertinent, London show of contemporary Italian art

Fresh from the village school

Italian art since Impressionism has always been something of a problem for British art-lovers, mainly because things do not seem to happen in the right order. The huge 1989 Royal Academy show of *Italian Art in the 20th Century* did not help very much, since it was programmatically slanted to make the history look like a triumphant and single-minded progression from Futurism to Clementi and Chia. At least the more modest show of *Twentieth Century Italian Art from Symbolism to Scuola Romana*, at the European Academy for the Arts (the former Accademia Italiana), provides an illuminating corrective.

The British difficulty goes back to Roger Fry, who did his utmost to make British notions of art Francocentric. The way things ought to happen was the way things had happened in France: Impressionism was succeeded by Pointillism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism and so to Abstraction, all being motivated by the application of the mind to the evidences of the eye, rather than the visual embodiment of what the mind creates. The essence of Italian art since the mid-19th century has always been otherwise: the visionary imagination comes first, and then the vision achieves realisation.

The village of Anticoli Corrado, in the hills about 25 miles from Rome, might seem like an odd place to look for demonstration, but this show, drawn largely from the art museum there, proves to be a vivid evocation of the Italian alternative.

Anticoli Corrado was, like Newlyn or Darmstadt, an artists' colony for more than a century, and those who worked there, from Leighton's friend Nino Costa in the 1860s right through to Emanuele Cavalli in the 1960s, offer a good representative cross-section of what was going on in Italy at the time.

The earliest contributors to the show are pleasurable but not particularly impressive: painters such as Sartorio, De Carolis and Hiremy-Hirschl do not stand very high even among admirers of Symbolism, and tend to teeter on the verge of kitsch.

> The village of Anticoli Corrado was an artists' colony for a century

But as soon as we move on to the Scuola Romana, mastery is everywhere apparent. Superficially this group might seem to be one of the many groups of Neo-Realists who heeded the *rappel à l'ordre* of the Twenties, parallel to the Neue Sachlichkeit in Germany. But though the general thrust is representational, the real question is: exactly what do they seek to represent?

For the Germans their "new objectivity" was wilfully unsparing. For the Italians there is glamour, poetry, ambiguity in the apparently realistic style. At a glance, one of the show's masterpieces, Fausto Pirandello's *Gymnasium*, looks like a documentary image of boxers training. But there is something disturbing about it. What conceivably realistic viewpoint can explain everything in it: the boxer at a punchbag apparently in mid-air, the crouched figure on the same level who appears about to spring into the void, the mysterious character nudging into the composition from the left, but not quite making it?

What we are looking at is still, in the Thirties, a Symbolistic equivalent of documentary reality, a picture as haunting as Pirandello's *Scala* (1934), in which the figure descending the ladder seems to stop and start, change direction and come apart at the seams.

And if it is suggested that these painters of the Scuola Romana do not really count, because they did not lead anywhere that art ought to have been going, there is at least one unexpected answer.

In December 1933 Cavalli and Capogrossi, the two painters most lavishly represented at the European Academy, had a joint show in Paris at the Jacques Bonjean Gallery; it was in the introduction to the catalogue that Waldemar George first propagated the "Scuola Romana" label. And among the Paris-based artists to see the show and be profoundly influenced by it was none other than Balthus. Since, after the death of Bacon, Balthus is widely regarded as the greatest living painter, surely anything which shaped his style cannot help but be significant?

● Twentieth Century Italian Art from Symbolism to Scuola Romana *is at the European Academy for the Arts and Accademia Italiana, 8 Grosvenor Place, SW1 (0171-235 0303), until Feb 16*

A taste of Italy: *Gualfarda* by Felice Carena, from the new exhibition at the European Academy

DONALD COOPER

"Cirque du Soleil is New Circus, where elements of the past join today's music and materials"

CIRCUS: **Jeremy Kingston** on the stunning *Saltimbanco* at the Albert Hall

This is no time for gravity

The evening does start off with clowns and, although the space they are in is larger than any traditional big top, they behave as clowns usually do, larking with the audience and conversing in squeaks and twitters. But this is just warm-up stuff, filling time until the latecomers are in place, after which the show takes off, and becomes as extraordinary as the hype says it is going to be.

This is not the least of the marvels of the Cirque du Soleil, the Montreal-based group that currently has four different shows playing on three continents, dazzling audiences on each of them with — well, one has to use the inevitable cliché — skills that defy gravity and daring that defies all the pettifogging caution that most of us employ to stay safely and quietly on the earth.

The Chinese poles, for instance: four vertical masts standing two yards apart, up which 12 acrobats scramble, turn and hurtle, face downward, stopping with the tip of the nose an inch from the ground and a millisecond the right side of self-preservation. Not only are such feats amazing, but the performers look so astoundingly elegant while doing them, dressed in randomly striped body stockings.

Circus people don't have muscles, joints or sinews like the rest of the human race. In the *Trio Adagio*, Elena Gromova is able to stand on the palm of the outstretched hand of Leonid Beljakov, who can bend his nine-year-old son Anton into an oval and slip him down over her body. My eyes are witness to the sight of either Marco or Paulo Lorador balancing upside down on the other's upraised foot. Contortionists bend over backwards and scamper improbably across the ground like two-legged scorpions. Up on the trapeze bars women swing and slide across each other, or one topples along the other's body, catching hold of a foot from which to dangle and spin.

> They don't have joints or sinews like the rest of the human race

The performing area spreads forward like a multicoloured tongue from the place where the orchestra usually sits, but the performing volume soars high above this to a point almost halfway to the roof. The daring young women and men swing their flying trapezes up to this level before leaping across the gap between them: I don't want to imagine how the ground must look to them in the second before they do this.

Cirque du Soleil is New Circus: no animals, no Sousa marches; quaint costumes, quainter head-dresses suggesting a medieval ancestry. But elements of the past have joined music and materials of today. Fifty performers line up at the end to take their bows, and with so large a company something is always happening somewhere on the stage, enabling one section to flow easily into the next.

The most ravishing display occurs near the end, when four trapeze artistes use bungee swings to plunge in unison towards the ground, weave and bob between each other, accompanied by some Gluck-like aria that turns the scene into the sportive play of weightless Olympians. It is magic. Achieved through years of training and a life-preserving knowledge of physical laws, but magic nonetheless.

Richard Morrison is away. His column will return next week

Stuck in traffic

THE Trinidadian dramatist Derek Walcott has suggested that the purpose of modern highways is to get you from A to B quickly enough "to give you time the other end to wonder why you went so fast". A character in his *Beef, No Chicken* is saying somewhat the same thing when he defines a straight line as "the most boring distance between two points". Perhaps lanes that wind over narrow bridges and dawdle past old women are better for the human soul, not to mention what Walcott calls "the spirits of the countryside".

Beef, No Chicken is, I suppose, a nostalgic play, but since it was written 20 years ago, it is also a prescient one. It is at its best when it mounts a debate about progress in the form of a mini-town meeting in which Trinidadian counterparts of the corrupt officials in Gogol's *Government Inspector* try to bamboozle a balky fellow citizen into sacrificing his tacky café-and-garage business to the motorway deities. Sadly, Walcott is less effective when it comes to managing his chosen form, which is farce.

THEATRE

Beef, No Chicken
Tricycle, NW6

At times I felt that Yvonne Brewster's production could be sharper and clearer and that her Talawa Theatre Company could trim some of the self-conscious swagger from their acting. But Walcott himself must take responsibility for a sense of sprawl, discursiveness and confusion that does more for atmosphere than for plot. There is nothing less friendly to laughter than a lot of people trying very hard to be funny when you don't quite know what's happening.

Why the distracting love interest? Couldn't the dramatic purpose of the armed robbers and the TV crew who materialise in Otto's eaterie be better established? Nevertheless, the thrust of Walcott's satire cannot be missed. Trinidad is not the only target successfully struck in the midriff when Jim Findley's road tycoon earnestly argues that bribery is the progressive way of getting major projects off the ground ("and the bigger the gift, the surer the economic health of the city"), or Geff Francis's bloated Mayor yearns to run a "real city", meaning one with plenty of crime and pollution.

It might be better for the farce if Shango Baku's glum, wary Otto spent more time disguised as the ghostly crone come to protect the countryside, and better for the play if his conversion to the "progressive" party were more lucidly explained. But you don't have to go to Trinidad to cheer the proposition that the more roads you have the more cars you get, and the more cars you get the more roads you need, until your nation is nothing but gridlocked Tarmac.

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Opportunity crumbles

Defunct hospitals and barracks are part of our architectural heritage, argues **Giles Worsley**

It has taken the Prince of Wales to draw public attention to the crisis facing Britain's redundant institutional buildings. The establishment of his Phoenix Trust, which aims to find new uses for some of the scores of threatened former barracks, hospitals and mental asylums, is the only national response so far to the greatest disposal of public buildings since the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century. As was tragically the case then, demolition looks the most likely fate for most of these buildings.

Britain used to be proud of its institutional buildings. Solidly built at the height of Victorian and Edwardian self-confidence, great mental asylums, many of them set in hundreds of acres of beautifully landscaped grounds, can be found on the edge of every major city and town. The relics of Britain's imperial past — barracks, dockyards, gunpowder works — are scattered across the country, some on remote, beautiful sites, others in the centres of historic towns. Many are breathtaking in scale or architectural ambition. The Royal William Victualling Yard in Plymouth has more in common with a great Oxford or Cambridge college than with our conventional image of a dockyard.

Care in the community, defence cutbacks and changing patterns of healthcare have all forced a major shake-out of institutional buildings. Of 121 former mental asylums in England, for example, 98 will have closed by the year 2000. With the right political imagination, this could be seen as an enormous opportunity. Such buildings are ideally suited to be turned into ready-made communities, to provide homes for fledgeling institutions in search of a home or as sites to generate new economic opportunities. Instead they are perceived as a problem to be solved in the crudest possible manner — neglect, demolition and replacement by soulless housing or industrial units.

> 'These robust buildings give us a sense of place'

The failure is felt at every level, from the Government through to the housebuilding industry. Despite the Prime Minister's publicly declared sympathy for historic buildings, his ministers remain strangely silent. The Ministry of Defence under Michael Portillo has been burnt by the outcry over its inept handling of the sale of the Royal Naval College in Greenwich. The Department of Health — always obstructive in finding new uses for redundant hospitals and mental asylums — has not changed under Stephen Dorrell, whose lack of interest in such issues was only too clear during his silent tenure of the Department of National Heritage. As for the DNH, the supposed guardian of historic buildings, it is hardly surprising that it has failed to speak out when its Secretary of State, Virginia Bottomley, was responsible for many of the closures during her time at the Health Department.

Nor has English Heritage stepped into the breach. Far from raising the alarm, its responses have been to cast an academic eye over the history of barracks and hospitals. Those which shed light on this have been listed. The vast majority, deemed not to be of architectural importance despite their solid craftsmanship, were left unprotected. For most planning authorities and developers, that is a green light for demolition.

The greatest failing has been the inflexibility of the housebuilding industry. Solely interested in throwing up row upon row of standardised houses, it has failed to grasp the concept of converting former barracks or hospitals. This lack of imagination generates the pressure to demolish or, where listing prevents that, to swamp the grounds with new housing.

And yet where developers have had the chance to convert them, these robust buildings have proved to be immensely adaptable. They also provide that indefinable but essential quality which we seem incapable of creating today: a sense of place. Barracks and hospitals form attractive housing — as the success of the former Peninsula Barracks in Winchester and the creation of Moorhaven Village in Devon from the former Plymouth Borough Asylum have shown.

In Scotland, the former Crichton Asylum is to become an extra campus of Glasgow University. In Lancaster, the Royal Albert Asylum is to become a boarding school for Muslim girls. The astonishing success of Sir Ernest Hall at Dean Clough Mills in Halifax has shown how large redundant buildings can be the seedbed for dynamic economic activity.

The history of conservation since the last war has shown that the re-use of historic buildings is an effective way to generate economic prosperity. The launch of the Phoenix Trust is a major step forward, but the danger is that the Government and English Heritage, having nodded approval to the trust, will sit back, their consciences assuaged. But the trust can be no more than a catalyst. It could only take on a handful of sites at a time. That leaves hundreds more at risk.

A few simple steps would go some way to solving the problem. As listing is clearly not enough to protect sites on this scale; a national programme of conservation area creation is clearly necessary. Better publicity for successful schemes would prevent local authorities trying to reinvent the wheel every time a mental asylum was made redundant.

But ultimately the problem is the lack of political will. Demolition is the lazy solution. In ten years' time, when these buildings are just a memory, the problem will have been solved but the cost will have been enormous — the cost to our national heritage and the cost of lost opportunities. In the 1950s, country houses were being demolished every week because no one had the imagination to re-use them. Today demolition of country houses is almost unheard of.

We need a similar change in attitude towards our former institutional buildings. Until that happens, the Phoenix Trust can only be a sticking plaster on an open wound.

The author is the Editor of Perspectives on Architecture

Britain has failed to become a nation of shareholders, says **Peter Riddell**. But a nation of savers?

If you see Sid, tell him to start saving

Popular capitalism should be a central theme of the Tory campaign — a vote-winning initiative which unites the party. But it has hardly been mentioned so far, and did not feature at all in the Budget. Tory strategists and thinkers recognise the need to reinvent the policy but are unsure how to do so.

The 1980s version was one of the most evocative and successful initiatives of the high Thatcherite period. A marriage of privatisation and wider share ownership, it symbolised the post-1979 shift of political and economic power — for once a slogan with substance, with a direct payoff for millions of people. But popular capitalism encompasses a number of separate objectives, on promoting privatisation, personal savings and enterprise, which have proved to be distinct and in part incompatible.

The idea of a property-owning democracy was first floated by Anthony Eden in 1948, but he thought of it mainly as a form of industrial partnership. Wider share ownership later became a favourite Tory incantation, but it only really took off when the Treasury considered how to sell off British Telecom in 1984. In face of the initial scepticism of City advisers, Nigel Lawson decided on a mass marketing. This was a resounding success, partly thanks to the big underpricing of the shares, and was the model for subsequent sales of the other utilities. This resulted in a near trebling in the number of individual shareholders to more than 11 million, a peak of 22 per cent of adults by 1990.

The Tories proclaimed this in almost moral terms — spreading the virtues of ownership and thrift, and the risks and rewards of investment. It was also intended to entrench opposition to renationalisation. Labour only adjusted slowly and the Tories skilfully exploited the opportunities, writing in the 1987 election to shareholders in the utilities to give warning about the threat from Labour plans. A similar campaign is planned against Labour's proposed windfall tax on the utilities. Buyers of privatisation shares have anyway been disproportionately Tory, but research in the British Election Study has shown that popular capitalism, both the sale of council houses and privatisation, did make people significantly less likely to vote Labour and attracted some people to the Tories.

Many people were attracted by the hope, usually fulfilled, of a quick profit. They wanted a short-term punt rather than a long-term investment. Despite further flotations, the number of shareholders has declined during the 1990s to about 9.5 million, although this should be boosted by building society conversions. But half of these shareholders have only one share and only a sixth have four or more. The value of holdings remains tiny by comparison with people's equity in their homes, their pension rights and savings in banks and building societies.

In retrospect, the privatisation flotations were one-offs, important in changing attitudes but not a suitable long-term way to broaden capital ownership. The volatile performance of utility shares, including last year's offer of British Energy, suggest they are not suitable for small investors.

The same is likely to be true of future planned privatisations. Instead of being safe and predictable, the utilities are subject to the desire of regulators to increase competition and reduce monopoly profits, as British Gas shareholders have learnt to their cost. That is not what small investors of the type attracted by the "tell Sid" campaign expected when British Gas was sold off a decade ago. There is an inbuilt contradiction between the risk-taking inherent in individual shareholding and most people's desire to minimise such risks. This was identified by the Committee on Private Share Ownership as one of the main obstacles to stock market investments.

Privatisation, whatever its merits for the firms concerned, is not the best way to promote enterprise and capitalist attitudes among the public as a whole. Entrepreneurs will not be created by the offer of a few shares. More important are specific tax and other incentives to encourage business formation. Some Tory policy-makers are considering whether more needs to be done to encourage people to provide services to the private sector — for instance, teachers and parents getting together to set up British versions of the American charter schools, or to offer particular courses. This would be akin to the financial independence of general practitioners, especially fundholders.

Instead of the confusing slogan of Popular Capitalism, what is really needed is a policy for Popular Savings. As lobbying groups such as ProShare have argued, there is a strong case for encouraging people to build up equity-based investments as well as fixed-interest bank and building society holdings. Apart from the growing number of employee shareholders, this may be better achieved by collective means such as unit and investment trusts which spread risk. This is shown by the success of personal equity plans (Peps), tax-free on income and withdrawals, which have risen to more than £28 billion since their launch in 1986. A snag is that such measures can result in a switching around of savings rather than an increase in the total. A better answer might be a more comprehensive reform to treat pensions, Peps and similar savings schemes alike via a general overall tax relief. That could be tied in with giving people a more direct interest in, and control over, their pensions.

An increase in savings by people in their thirties and forties, if not younger, is desirable in view of the pressures on welfare spending. If the taxpayer is unable, and unwilling, to finance the standard of services and long-term care for the elderly that people want, then they will have to save while they are still earning. Under any likely government, greater personal provision will be needed to provide an adequate income in retirement.

There is big scope here for the Conservatives to develop a broader Popular Savings initiative which might be both electorally popular and economically right in the long term — a rare double.

No plug, no wires, no rivals

In five centuries, science has failed to produce anything more useful than the printed book — including the Internet

Let us assume the wizards had their way. In every corner of every home, office and school glows a lighted screen. Oozing from the Internet is all that mankind could desire. Each housewife is plugged into the Library of Congress. Each five-year-old can summon Relativity Theory at the squeak of a mouse. Electronics shares reach record levels.

Into the denim-wailed offices of Internet mogul Bill Gates walks a Mr Caxton. He has contrived a method of putting this material into portable form. His invention needs no lighted screen. It enables written words to be read with the naked eye, and even fashioned into compact volumes to fit into a handbag. They are immune to viruses and do not crash jet planes. Mr Caxton's contraption requires no costly electronic hardware, no batteries, cables or wall plugs. Third World countries can use it. Mr Gates sees the threat instantly and shows Mr Caxton the door.

Had the book come after, not before, the screen, I lay money the pundits would have declared the Internet a passing and costly fad. Out would go the dirty, eye-tiring screens with their plugs and wires and inconvenient sockets. In their place would be books, objects of beauty customised to the needs of the mobile leisure classes. Governments would subsidise school libraries and set up bookshops on every street corner. Teachers would be retrained to read. Tony Blair and Michael Heseltine would launch "Book 2000" initiatives and donate millennial millions. Books, being cheap, would liberate the poor and be the salvation of culture. Caxton would move to Malibu, wear sneakers and top the Fortune 500.

Last week a Policy Studies Report confirmed what I long suspected. Beside every terminal lurks a furtive reader. The popularity of books has risen steadily over the first decade of the "information revolution", a revolution that was predicted to herald their demise. Book sales are up since 1989, as is real-terms spending on books, the latter by an extraordinary 45 per cent. The number of titles has almost doubled since 1987, giving the lie to the publishers' lament that too many books are published. The percentage of the population buying 16 or more books in a year has risen from 28 per cent to 30 per cent. The public loves books and has thumbed its nose at the much-hyped revolution — or at least regards it as having nothing to do with books.

That revolution has already seen three of its most over-promoted innovations degenerate into small niches (Ceefax/Prestel, touch-screen, CD-Rom). Books-on-screen has died almost at birth. Now comes the Internet. The zest of computer firms to get parents and children hooked has sent them pleading to politicians for help. Needless to say, politicians will oblige. The Labour Party's David Blunkett is today promising a £150 million subsidy to install the Internet in schools as part of a British Telecom promotion. Last October Michael Heseltine made a similar pledge for the Tories. Neither made any mention of helping schools to buy more books.

A civilisation declares itself by its books. A house without books is a shelter but not a home. Children who do not read novels may be trained but not educated. "Computer literacy" is an essential tool for living, like being able to handle money, law and personal relationships. It has nothing to do with literacy. Screens aid information retrieval and offer harmless fun. But to substitute computers for schoolbooks is a travesty. To suppose that cybernauts from the World Wide Web are about to zap the writers and readers of books as co-sponsors of Western culture (as did the University of California's survey *The Future of the Book*) is ludicrous.

So great is the commercial hyperbole surrounding the Internet that common sense is obliterated by dazzle. It has proved a boon for pornographers and lawyers and for the sort of upmarket pen pals who used to rave about Citizens' Band radio. For companies and interest groups, the "intranet" is a more efficient version of the fax. E-mail has done wonders for the ancient art of letter-writing. I can see that being able to download the entire British Library on to one's kitchen table, or cruise the Louvre from one's armchair, is in theory exhilarating. But like Heath Robinson's suggestions for winning the Great War, the concept is unlikely to have widespread application.

Simon Jenkins

The Internet is one more electronic craze that market forces will sooner or later put in its proper context. For the time being, its fanatical proponents need the sympathy and tolerance once extended to Esperantists and radio hams. In the history of science, I would place the Internet well behind the word processor, the telephone and the lightbulb. It is popular because it is still heavily subsidised by the computer industry, and soon by the Government. Children, victims of the present marketing drive, need to learn computing alongside many other skills. But that is not what the Treasury will shortly be subsidising.

All this will soon shake down. What is absurd is for screen communication to require for its self-esteem the ridiculing of books. Highly paid seminar addicts such as MIT's Nicholas Negroponte deride the book for having to be taken down from a shelf and "accessed", one person at a time. Geoffrey Numberg declares in the Berkeley book (sic) that most books as "bound, printed volumes will likely disappear soon". The deconstructionists proclaim that the "closed" book is dead. The advent of digital hypertext will liberate the reader from "the tyranny of the writer". I suppose smashing pictures on the floor liberates viewers from the tyranny of artists. It is the freedom of the brain-dead.

Thoreau famously warned against inventions as merely "improved means to an unimproved end". I accept that the goal of the written word is in part the dissemination of information. The Internet is an aid to this. Even here I do not believe it will seriously challenge the printed reference book. With both Internet and books at my disposal, I make vastly more use of the latter. They are, as Caxton showed, simply more convenient than something plugged into a wall and requiring constant energy.

The surprise star of the PSI survey was books of the imagination. Fiction is still the biggest category of books bought. Novels have not been replaced by computer games or video nasties. The latest Archer, Francis or Grisham may not rank with Milton's "precious lifeblood of a master spirit". But the vitality of literary publishing, poetry, plays and novels, defies the Jeremiahs of the publishing industry.

The book is the seminal invention of modern civilisation. The history of communication since Gutenberg and Caxton testifies to its appeal. What arrived on the cultural landscape back in the 15th century has remained unchallenged, certainly by anything that electronics can offer. To move a mountain, you must write a book. To found a religion or launch a political party, you must write a book. Attack an enemy, support a friend, tell a story, justify a career, you must write a book. Even if you wish to sneer at books, you must write a book.

The Internet will strut an hour upon the stage, and then take its place in the ranks of lesser media. It needs no subsidy. If we want to splash public money on culture, splash it on books.

Anthony Woodville and his printer, William Caxton, present their book, published in 1477, to King Edward IV

Eve dawns

AFTER an absence of two years from journalism, Eve Pollard, the former Editor of the *Sunday Express*, has bounced back into the murky world of tabloid newspapers.

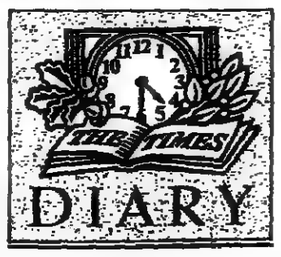
From this weekend, she will be filling the late Marje Proops's slot as agony aunt of the *Sunday Mirror*, a paper she once edited.

Pollard: hears your pain

Her contributions are to come in a page headlined Dear Eve, in which she "shoots from the hip" according to Amanda Platell, the Group Managing Editor of Mirror Group Newspapers. Eve will also offer advice in a section headed In Bed With Eve. "It is simply a tip of the week to help improve a couple's sex life," explains Platell.

An early copy of Eve's sex tip for tomorrow's paper has fallen my way. "Winter is here but you must resist the temptation to wear your socks in bed, since your man will not like it," she advises her readers. "If you must wear a nightdress, make sure it is see-through. If you still feel chilly, go to bed in your fur coat." *Sunday Mirror* readers are long on fur coats.

I understand that she also submitted a comprehensive reply to the newspaper in answer to a woman who complained that her husband beat her up: "Dear Diana," it read. "Wife-beating is a common problem. It is estimated that XXXXX women are beaten up every year. Of these, XXX end up in hostels and XXXX have the courage to take their complaints to the police. XXXX children find themselves in broken homes and XXXX men finally go to prison. You must not feel helpless. There are a number of agencies who can help you including XXX and XXXX."



Attached was a note, asking researchers to fill in the gaps. "That must have been an early draft of my ideas for a reply," she explained. "But unfortunately we could not collate the statistics. They're very hard to come by."

● *From* The Washington Post *come entries for The Worst Analogies Ever Written in a High School Essay contest: "The little boat drifted across the pond exactly the way a bowling ball wouldn't"; "He was as tall as a six-foot three-inch tree." And one I don't think is so bad: "The hailstones leaped from the pavement, just like maggots when you fry them in hot grease."*

Last orders

THERE is a dry taste in mouths around El Paso these days — and for once it is not the fault of Francisco Morales, known around southwest Texas as Pancho. On Thursday, Morales, the inventor of the Margarita, was buried, having died of a stroke aged 78.

According to cocktail lore, a young Morales was idling behind Tommy's Bar in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, on a lizard-parching July 4, 1942, when a woman came in and asked for a cocktail he had never heard of. Reluctant to lose face in front of the dame, he decided to bluff. He threw together some tequila, cointreau and lime juice, then grazed the rim of the glass with salt.

"Like it, kid," said the customer, eyes hooded, cigarette twitching from the tequila's kick. "Whaddya call it?" Bluffing again, he made a name up. Like refried beans in a pan, it stuck.

White lie

FESTERING at the heart of Tara Palmer-Tomkinson's skiing holiday in Klosters is a terrible deceit. Worse, for this schussing clothes-horse, it involves fashion. While on the slopes for her not-so-low-profile, get-away-from-it-all holiday, TP-T, essayist and one-time A-level student, has been wearing and trumpeting the fancy clothes of Sam de Teran, a London-based designer. For her troubles, she says she receives nothing but the occasional free outfit. But about this exotically named de Teran: contemporaries at Cambridge remember her as plain Sam Angus. Later she married, becoming Sam Godsal. As she grew in the rag trade, however, it seemed time to exploit her mother's more chic maiden name. Her glamourpuss client would quite understand.

"I thought your resolution was actually to hit the ball"

A la carte

AS CHANCELLOR of Oxford University, Lord Jenkins of Hillhead has learnt that change at the Varsity is an incremental process. In a recent speech, he laid down his plans for an expanded Chancellor's role: "Do I think that I ought to be involved more in the university's decision-making or, as some would claim, lack of decision-making? I think that my answer to this is 'up to a point', but only up to a fairly limited point."

Clearly, Loverboy Jenkins — the revelation last year that he had an affair with Jackie Kennedy's sister Lee Radziwill has changed his image forever — has lost some of that grand political ambition.

Jenkins: not so fast

"I think I might have a little more say in the arrangement of Encaenia and other such occasions," he says. "Even the most constitutional of sovereigns are allowed to choose the menus for state banquets."

P·H·S

هكذا من الأصل

NANNY STATE

Families need fathers, not big government

If there is one posture more comfortable for the electioneering politician than being wrapped in the flag it is to nestle in the bosom of the family. The Prime Minister sought yesterday to make homeland and hearth his battleground for the election. In the preface to a collection of speeches, *Our Nation's Future*, John Major affirms his belief in "the fundamental importance of the family and our national institutions as the foundations of a free, caring, decent and democratic society".

The family, however, has shown a wise reluctance in the past to be conscripted by any political party. It is not enough for a politician to proclaim his support for the institution and expect its members' gratitude. Just as the Conservative claim to be the party of the nation can be tested by actions in Belfast and Brussels, so Tory pretensions to be the party of the family must be measured against actual policy.

The Prime Minister, anxious only to show a glimpse of the stocking full of goodies his manifesto will bring, did not reveal much of substance yesterday. Instead, he asked voters "to look behind the policies ... to understand the convictions which make that party tick". The Conservatives, sensitive to Labour's initiative in considering curfews and promoting a debate on parenting, hope that the electorate will regard new Labour's embrace of family values as shallow infatuation. But to offset criticism, the Prime Minister must demonstrate a real difference.

There is certainly merit in questioning whether direct state intervention in family life will strengthen it, any more than it helped shipbuilding or steel. As Ferdinand Mount has argued, the family is a "subversive organisation", a focus for loyalty which has stubbornly resisted the embrace of Leviathan and outlived the many ideologies which have attempted to appropriate it. To believe that the childminder in Whitehall knows best is to misunderstand the family and fall into the persistent socialist error of trying to regulate civil society. In his suspicion of the "faceless State", the Prime Minister's instincts are in accord with real family values which are less to do with fixed bedtimes and more a matter of cherishing voluntary affection and natural authority.

Mr Major may recognise that there is a limit to what the State can do to help the family but that does not absolve his administration of responsibility for policies which have actively harmed it. The most signal area of failure has been taxation. The Treasury prejudice in favour of a "neutral" tax regime which seeks to treat children, like company cars, as unworthy of special treatment has, in practice, discriminated against families. Virtually all single people have seen their tax burden decline under the Conservatives while for the poorest families, those on an income half the national average, the tax burden has risen from 2.4 per cent to 10 per cent.

Loving parents do not pause before conceiving to study tax regimes, but the structure of rates, benefits and allowances does influence behaviour and attitudes over time. The skewing of the tax and benefits system to subsidise the raising of children without fathers and penalise traditional family structures has seen a culture of irresponsibility develop among young men. The Labour sociologist Norman Dennis has identified the revolt against respectability as a prime cause of rising crime and social fracture. Far from making an unfair claim on single people, a tax system which supports the family provides the best guarantee of a more stable society for all. It would be, in the proper sense, a system of national insurance. Reforming the welfare state in a manner which nurtures virtue should be the challenge for any party which claims to value the family.

HEAVY HAND

The paranoid style in Singapore politics

Goh Chok Tong, Singapore's Prime Minister, has called the crushing general election victory of his People's Action Party a "watershed election". His party won all but two seats in parliament, denying seats to the island's two most prominent opposition leaders, Joshua Jeyaretnam of the Workers' Party and Chee Soon Juan of the Singapore Democratic Party. One pro-government newspaper remarked that "more than anyone else, he won big".

Mr Goh's victory, more reminiscent of election results in totalitarian states than in genuine democracies, leaves a sour taste. The Prime Minister and his supporters are particularly celebrating the PAP's win in the multimember Cheng San constituency, where polls had suggested the mainly working-class area was leaning towards the Opposition. The prospect of any win by a Workers' Party candidate seemed to induce panic. The Prime Minister suggested his own standing would be damaged, warned voters that Singapore's prestige would suffer, and issued thinly disguised threats that a district failing to support the PAP would lose a multimillion-pound programme to renovate housing estates.

All means at the Government's disposal were used to discredit the Opposition. Mr Goh launched a barrage of personal attacks on opposition leaders. He invoked the sensitive race issue, accusing Tang Liang Hong, the WP leader, of Chinese nationalism. And he said opposition leaders were peddling a "Western" agenda.

Such behaviour verges on paranoia. It is hard to understand why Mr Goh demands such grovelling obedience. The PAP, which has ruled the island since Singapore's independence, was never in any danger of losing, since the Opposition put up candidates in fewer than half the constituencies. Though resentment of the nanny state and grumbling over the Government's monopoly of power has increased, especially among the younger generation, there is no widespread political revolt. Singapore is peaceful, prosperous and poised to take full advantage of its status as a world finance and communications centre. At home and abroad there is widespread recognition of the success in cleaning up and building up the island's efficient economy. Do the humorous whisperings of criticism really pose a threat to Singapore's wellbeing?

Singapore makes much of its modernity, business acumen and social cohesion. The government wants materiel achievements to be judged by world standards; but in moral, political and social matters it insists such comparisons are neither fair nor relevant. Singapore, its leaders say, upholds "Asian values" which have little to do with Western concepts of human rights or individual entitlements. Criticism by Western democracies is denounced as hypocrisy and meddling; when Washington rightly denounced Mr Goh's housing threat, Singapore insisted that this was normal practice.

This is not the behaviour of a self-confident state. Mr Goh may indeed have won because voters think they are better off with the PAP. But if Singapore wants — as it does — to compete with Hong Kong, it should demonstrate that freedom is indivisible: those trading and living in Singapore will prosper only if they are untrammelled by state-enforced conformity and heavy-handed politics.

GLOBAL GRAPES

From Pinochet to pinot noir

When Keats yearned for a "beaker full of the warm south", could he ever have guessed just how far south the oenological explorers of the northern supermarket chains would venture? Thirty years ago, wine was French and that was that. Californian and Australian wines invaded. They rose in price and were undercut by Chile, now better known for pinot noir than General Pinochet, which enjoys one of the world's few climates where you can ski and sunbathe on the same day. Today the newly fashionable Chilean reds and whites are fighting off the latest newcomers from Argentina.

Britain lies seventh in the world wine-drinking league. But while consumption in countries which have been drinking vast quantities for centuries has been slackening off, Britons keep buying more wine. Since British winemaking is in its infancy, our wine importing is nationality-blind. Without leaving the off-licence, the British fan of the grape zigzags across the globe in search of what the latest corkscrew guru has advised is a flirtatiously fruity cabernet with a *soupçon* of sumo wrestler's armpit. With every new expertise comes a new bore: the man who tells you more than you want to know about the raspberry ripple bouquet in rioja should be known as a cork dork.

Britain imported 26 million bottles of Chilean wine and drank more than 850 million bottles in all last year. When growers in Cognac and California recently sounded the alarm over a malignant mushroom which threatens their vines, the linkage of the places only served to underline that as far as supermarket shelves go, they are the old world. South America is almost passé. Stand by for the new cuvées from the Czechs, the Chinese, the Mexicans and the Moldovans. British supermarkets hire "flying winemakers" who criss-cross continents in search of promising raw material made by less well-developed viticulture which, with the aid of a little new technology, can be transformed into something a wine-writer will put at the top of the chart. The cultural categories become confusing: shops sell "French wine made in Australia".

By being geographically promiscuous, British wine-drinkers learn to be more discerning about grape varieties, climate calculations and bold new blends. But mass markets smooth out the rich variety of local practice. Ten years ago, few chardonnay grapes were grown in Spain, South Africa, Chile, New Zealand or Central Europe; vast acreages now exist to supply new demand. Chardonnay is relatively easy to produce and — more important — simple to pronounce. Its far easier to order a bottle of Cloudy Bay chardonnay than a bottle of Castel de Paolis I Quattro Mori, particularly if you've already had a glass or three. There are country clubs and children called Chardonnay. But just as we might start to worry that one grape might elbow out other varieties, the wine business reports that consumers are beginning to suffer from "chardonnay fatigue". Taste is a restless, fickle thing.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

UK given away — or sold off?

From Mr David Selbourne

Sir, John Redwood (letter, December 28) objects to British politicians who, presumably in the name of their Europhilia, "would give this country away". But in what sense is this morally, or civically, more culpable than selling off our public and civic institutions — Army housing, the railways, the utilities, the Stationery Office, County Hall and all the rest of it — to the highest bidder, and sometimes not even to the highest bidder, in the name of the "free market"?

Each of these sales represents a disposal of public goods, institutions and interests to the "unelected" and all promote, in one form or another, dissolution of the civic order. There is no qualitative difference between the dispersal of a nation's identity among contending market interests of no fixed abode, seeking to buy up parts of the very fabric which holds the body politic together, and the gradual surrender of a nation's sovereignty to extraterritorial bureaucracies and bankers in "Europe".

If there is some powerful (and truthful) distinction to be made between these two kinds of national solvent, perhaps Mr Redwood will tell us what it is. And if he cannot do so, why should we prefer to see a Japanese property developer installed in the former seat of London's government to a Brussels bureaucrat or Strasbourg judge telling us what are the limits of our rights and powers?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID SELBOURNE,
C. P. 152,
61029 Urbino (PS), Italy.
January 2.

Single currency

From Mr Donald Neale

Sir, Professor Sir Graham Hills (letter, December 28) advocates our adopting the single currency. The Maastricht treaty prescribes that it, and all related matters of monetary policy, be controlled solely by the board of the European Central Bank, consisting of the governors of the individual European central banks. Clause 109 guarantees they will be totally independent and accountable to no one — in short, a financial government.

Since their decisions will affect every man, woman and child in the Union, how can such concentration of unchallengeable power possibly be justified?

Yours faithfully,
DONALD NEALE,
21 Hawkhead Crescent,
Edinburgh.
December 30.

From Professor D. R. Myddelton

Sir, Gold was once a globally accepted currency compared to which the euro is an untried upstart.

British governments have failed disastrously to maintain the purchasing power of the pound this century; but German governments have done even worse with the mark.

Why should governments assume monopoly powers over money? Why not let people choose which money they prefer? In other words, let the free market work.

Yours faithfully,
D. R. MYDDELTON,
Cranfield School of Management,
Cranfield,
Bedford MK43 0AL.
December 30.

Quota hopping

From Mr Julian Williams

Sir, Mr Francis Deutsch (letter, December 30) is misinformed: there is no level playing field between the British and Spanish in the purchase of fishing quotas. The Spanish fleet receives subsidies from Brussels (£721 million between 1994 and 1998) which are not available to British fishermen.

On top of this, Community funds, which include British money, are being used to buy fishing rights for the Spanish fleet in Morocco (£392 million), Mauritania (£200 million) and Guinea, The Seychelles, Angola and São Tomé (£45 million in aggregate).

Furthermore, the Spanish land British fish in Spain, thus avoiding the British inspectors who forbid the sale of undersized fish. In Spain these fish are a delicacy and contribute to the fleet's profits.

Whilst Spain has by far the largest European fleet, and nowhere to go with it, the fishing grounds ascribed under international law to Britain contain about two thirds of the total fish available in EU waters — more than enough to maintain our diminishing fleet and fish industry.

The solution devised by Brussels is overfishing for all and a future for no one. This is how the international bureaucracy, over which we have almost no control, works.

Yours sincerely,
JULIAN WILLIAMS,
95c Hornsey Lane, N6.
December 30.

Weekend Money letters, page 29

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Risks posed to skiers by snowboards

From Mr Peter A. J. Parr-Davies

Sir, I relayed the gist of your reports on dangerous skiers and the involvement of snowboarders in a disproportionate number of collisions (December 27) to my son, on a ski holiday in Tignes in the French Alps with a friend. Within 24 hours, that same friend was struck violently from behind by a snowboarder while standing at the side of an otherwise empty piste.

The snowboarder struck him with such force as to throw him into the air and down on his head into the snow, break both skis, and inflict a deep and dangerous gash in a calf muscle.

The snowboarder, with the attitude that seems endemic to the breed, then simply sped off down the mountain leaving an innocent skier, with obviously broken skis, bleeding profusely into the snow at the side of a deserted piste. If the rescue services had not been alerted and quickly directed to the location, the skier might have bled or frozen to death.

The Val d'Isère guide quoted in your report correctly states that snowboarders follow a completely different trajectory from skiers, and that there is therefore an immediate incompatibility on shared pistes.

However, the greater problem may be that a young person can learn sufficient basics to use a snowboard within a couple of days in the resort, and then head off to the open slopes without further supervision or safety instruction, and without the genuine appreciation of the mountain environment, safety issues and consideration that skiers absorb during a longer process of instruction and learning with qualified teachers.

Until the French resorts address these issues sensible skiers should head for the inherently safer and better-regulated resorts of North America — particularly those few where snowboarders are simply not admitted.

Yours faithfully,
PETER A. J. PARR-DAVIES,
57 Lynton Avenue, Ealing, W13.
January 2.

New home for the Stone of Scone

From Mr Tom Coughtrie

Sir, Magnus Linklater, in his solemn article on the Stone of Scone, "Destiny robbed of all dignity" (December 31), might well have made a third suggestion for the Stone's final resting place, in addition to Iona or Scone: Westminster Abbey, where it rested for so long.

As an expatriate Scot, I wonder how many of us would be happier to see the old factions forgotten. All we would ask, in return for the generous and loving act of once more losing a relict which has meant so much to our nation, would be the return to us of *all* the Scottish archives removed by Edward I. The very few documents which have been returned during the intervening seven centuries are pitifully inadequate.

Perhaps the offer of the Stone's return might stimulate a painstaking and exhaustive search for the missing documents, which are beyond price. They would be of enormous value to scholars, students and all lovers of Scots history.

Yours faithfully,
TOM COUGHTRIE,
Winstone Thrieve,
Llanvetherine, Abergavenny, Gwent.

From Mrs Hilary McGowan

Sir, Like Magnus Linklater, I have recently visited Edinburgh Castle. I agree with him that the Stone of Destiny looks out of place on purple satin in a display case designed for regalia.

However, I have no doubt that the display will not be permanent, and I was impressed to note that, despite the curators of Historic Scotland being given very little warning of the Stone's arrival, new postcards are already available. In view of the public interest and their eagerness to see the Stone immediately, this display was the right decision.

A curator given a present by the Prime Minister at short notice and in the full glare of national publicity has no easy task. Spare a thought, Mr Linklater, for the cost of the exhibition and of publication changes, and be pleased that the Stone is once more on display in its native land.

Yours sincerely,
HILARY McGOWAN
(Museum and heritage consultant),
The Old Surgery,
Oldmixon Manor, Oldmixon,
Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.
January 2.

Saying sorry

From Dr C. M. Tomkins

Sir, I read and enjoyed Libby Purves's article, "Making sense of saying sorry" (December 31), but, in the context of medical errors, would have to take issue with the statement that "our whole system discourages the idea of expressing contrition, clearing the slate and behaving better in future". She repeats a common misunderstanding, that, in the case of medical and hospital errors, doctors are prevented from saying sorry for "fear of litigation". This is certainly not the view of the MDU (Medical Defence Union), the UK's leading provider of indemnity to doctors.

We advise our members, to "say sorry" if something has gone wrong with a patient's treatment. A sincere and honest apology should be made, either by the doctor concerned or, if appropriate, by a senior colleague. Most instances of patient dissatisfaction never develop into a complaint or claim because the doctor gives an immediate explanation or a courteous apology.

It may be that in car accidents, as Ms Purves suggests, insurers advise those involved not to make any admission of legal liability, but the position of doctors treating patients is quite different. The patient is always entitled to a prompt, appropriate and truthful account of what has occurred.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTINE TOMKINS
(Professional services director),
The Medical Defence Union Limited,
3 Devonshire Place, W1.
December 31.

From Mr Nigel R. MacNicol

Sir, In her admirable article today, Libby Purves draws attention to the fact that hardly anyone now offers or accepts apologies. The problem is that apologies today tend to come in an unacceptable form; to wit, "I'm sorry if anyone was upset".

Not only do such words convey no hint of contrition, but there may be a subtle suggestion that anyone foolish enough to be upset must either be overly sensitive, or irrational.

Not to accept such an "apology" seems ungracious, but to accept it means accepting the insult. Is there a neat rejoinder?

Yours faithfully,
N. R. MacNICOL,
9 Church Lane,
Greetham, Oakland, Rutland.
December 31.

West film decision

From Mr Ian Curteis

Sir, You explain (report, January 1) that the Official Solicitor has the responsibility of maximising the financial return on Fred West's estate. Should we not now simply add to his standing instructions "except financial return resulting from criminal activity"?

Yours truly,
IAN CURTEIS,
The Mill House, Coln St Aldwyns,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

From Mr G. L. Leigh

Sir, I am astonished that the Official Solicitor should apparently regard it as part of his duty to entertain such an outrageous proposal.

For many years I was trustee of a multimillion-pound trust. Arguments took place with my co-trustees over whether (in accordance with pusillanimous legal "thinking") gazumping was part of a trustee's duty (I thought not).

It is of paramount importance that a trustee should be seen to act honourably and with a modicum of common sense (fortunately trustees can only act unanimously) and so I got my way.

Yours sincerely,
G. L. LEIGH,
85 Leith Mansions,
Grantully Road, W9.
January 2.

Welsh connection

From Sir James Craig

Sir, The explorer John Cabot (your leader, December 28) may have another claim to be remembered.

According to the *Penguin Dictionary of Surnames*, it was he who gave America its name, wishing to honour the chief investor in his voyage, Richard Ameryk, a Welsh collector of customs at Bristol (whose name was originally spelled Ap Meryke).

The dictionary's author Basil Cottle (on whom be blessings), dismisses the more familiar claims of Amerigo Vespucci as "frivolous".

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
JAMES CRAIG,
2 St George's Square, SW1.
December 28.

Happy new year?

From the Reverend S. J. Davies

Sir, Allow me to nominate as the most ironical picture of the year that on the front page on Saturday, December 28, showing crowds of shoppers in London's Oxford Street the previous day. It illustrated a report entitled "Feel-good factor returns with the sales", in spite of the fact that every face was without a smile: everyone looked gloomy, worried or harassed.

One could only hope that some, at any rate, had been gladdened by the real Good News two days previously.

Yours obediently,
S. J. DAVIES,
The Devon & Exeter Institution,
7 Cathedral Close, Exeter, Devon.
December 30.

New year fun with 'forgotten' Fred

From Mr Maurice G. Crane

Sir, The new year has started well. First, the best party I've ever attended, and second, *The Times* report on "Forgotten Fred" and your excellent leader on the same subject (January 1). Freddie Frinton's film *Dinner for One* is not only a cast-iron new year institution in Germany, but also in Denmark and further north too.

One miserable new year in the late Eighties, the Danish national TV station that had just started to compete with a commercial channel thought they ought to modernise and cancel *Dinner for One*. The unanimously negative reaction across the land convinced them never to make the same mistake again.

Working in Copenhagen as an English businessman I was always addressed as "James" (the butler) by our lady accountant. Naturally, I was always pleased to refer to her as Miss Sophie.

There isn't a Dane who doesn't know and cherish every line and every move, every trip on the rug, including the breathless wait for the one move where the butler doesn't trip on the tiger's head. Freddie Frinton's journey from lugubrious sobriety to rolling intoxication in 17 minutes flat is a masterpiece of acting. To stand up in a Danish bar or party, pick up a beaker, down the contents and exclaim "I'll kill that cat" is to raise a smile of recognition from everyone in the room.

All Danish aficionados, by the way, will tell you that there are two versions of *Dinner for One*. One with a tablecloth and a much rarer version without. I believe the latter was banished to Swedish TV.

Yours sincerely,
M. G. CRANE,
Charlwood House, Tilford, Surrey.
January 1.

From Mr Peter A. Rushforth

Sir, It was about ten years ago that German business friends told me about *Dinner for One* with Freddie Frinton.

They found it hard to believe that we in the UK did not know about this delightful comedy. I am pleased to say that they provided me with a video copy which I have loaned to many people.

I cannot understand why this beautiful little piece, which brings Germany virtually to a standstill on New Year's Eve, is not shown in this country.

In my opinion Freddie was the best "drunk" of all, but I understand from someone who knew him in his home town of Grimsby that he was teetotal.

Yours faithfully,
PETER A. RUSHFORTH,
36 Sutton Drive, Cullingworth,
Bradford, West Yorkshire.
January 1.

Imaginative leap

From Mr Timothy Kirkhope, MP for Leeds North East (Conservative)

Sir, You report ("Workers must toil for one more day before 1997 tax burden lifts", December 28) that research by the usually august Adam Smith Institute suggests we will have to work until May 24 in 1997 to pay the tax due to the Government, whereas we were able to pay it off by May 23 in 1996. The implication therefore was that that meant an *extra* day's "toil".

This seems odd to me because May 24, 1997, is directly equivalent to May 23, 1996, taking into account February 29, 1996: a leap year, of course.

Yours,
TIMOTHY KIRKHOPE
(Under-Secretary of State,
Home Office),
House of Commons.
December 28.

And by the way . . .

From Mrs Alison Baverstock

Sir, A mailshot aims to prompt a purchase. It follows that it is laid out to attract the potential customer's attention rather than to demonstrate the word processor's techniques. The PS (letter, January 3) plays a key part in this.

On receiving a letter from someone you don't know, an instinctive reaction is to look to the bottom of the page to see who is writing. The eye then spots the PS. As your correspondent Mrs Teece has noticed the practice, I can only assume it still works.

Yours faithfully,
ALISON BAVERSTOCK,
10 Homersham Road,
Kingston upon Thames, Surrey.
January 3.

Hands across the sea

From Captain John Quayle

Sir, I have on board my merchant ship in the North Sea a resourceful second officer who, as the ship passes off the coast at Whitby, signals to his mother with the ship's Aldis lamp. She then flashes back with a large torch.

I find it difficult to imagine a more original method of communicating with a parent.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN QUAYLE,
Haze Cottage, North Caldy Road,
Caistor, Lincolnshire.
January 1.

SOCIAL NEWS

TOMORROW:
The Prince Edward, Patron, will attend a concert given by the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall at 7.30.

Premium Bonds

The following Premium Bond prizewinners were announced yesterday:

£100,000: 45BK 739481, winner has a holding of £15,000, and comes from Devon; 4AL 703068, £262, Avon; 9GF 677412, £20,000, Derbyshire; 34BK 891957, £9,998, South Yorkshire.

£50,000: 69QK 499407, £15,000, Isle of Man; 40NW 891597, £16,567, Surrey; 13MB 011461, £13,264, Cambridgeshire; 35MS 634459, £15,000, Nottinghamshire; 61GK 454451, £7,000, West Midlands; 25WF 724566, £703, Islington, London; 59LK 507704, £20,000, Avon; 42QN 932505, £20,000, Devon.

£25,000: 7TP 202461, £600, Sussex; 68LK 732610, £7,050, Devon; 50SP 697753, £20,000, Essex; 50FT 297864, £20,000, Kent; 32QL 013476, £19,953, Hertfordshire; 26BP 269678, £8,987, Co Fermanagh; 57AB 380000, £19,999, Essex; 49SN 736964, £20,000, Berkshire; 64LL 329763, £20,000, Warwickshire; 33JS 437468, £20,000, Middlesex; 34BF 072953, £11,080, Cumbria; 22CF 491782, £9,994, Gwent; 11WZ 175543, £2,150, Wandsworth, London; 36PF 809230, £10,100, Merseyside; 16SF 189530, £110, Nottinghamshire; 7NZ 863226, £19,995, Lancashire.

Appointment

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Dr George Goldner, Drue Heinz Chairman of the Department of Drawings and Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, has been appointed as the new Director of the Ashmolean Museum. He will take up the post on October 1, 1997, on the retirement of the current director, Professor Christopher White, and will be a Fellow of Worcester College.

Memorial service

Mrs A.W.T. McGaw
A service of thanksgiving for the life of Mrs Patricia Graves Stuart McGaw was held yesterday at St Olave's, Hart Street. The Rev John Cowling, Chaplain to the Clothworkers' Company, officiated. Mr Ptolemy Christie, grandson, read the lesson. Mr Edward Nicholson, grandson, read *The Ship* by Bishop Brent and Anna Nicholson, granddaughter, read two poems that remind her of "granny". Sir George Christie, son-in-law, gave an address.

The St Bride's Choir, directed by Mr Matthew Morley, sang during the service, with Mr Alexander Mason, organ, and Mr Tony Nash, trumpet. Among others present were:

Commander A.W.T. McGaw (husband), Mr and Mrs Brian Nicholson, Mr and Mrs David Nicholson and Mr and Mrs Ian McGaw (sons and daughters-in-law), Lady Christie (daughter), Mr Patrick Nicholson, Mr and Mrs Hector Christie and Mr and Mrs Augustus Christie (grandchildren), Mr and Mrs George Bowlby, Mr and Mrs John McGaw, Mr Stephen Howard, Mr Max Howard, Miss Elizabeth Howard, Mrs Gerald Howard, Mrs Louise Rutherford, Mrs George Garlick, Mrs Betty Lolley and other members of the family.

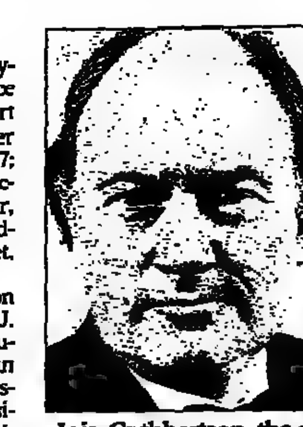
The Master of the Clothworkers' Company and Lady Alison Davis with past and present members of the Livery and Court of Assistants and many other friends.

Church news

Appointments
The Rev Patricia Impey: to be Rector, Felmingham, Skeyton, Colby, Banningham, Tuttington and Suffield (Norwich).
The Rev Stephen McGanity, Curate, St Stephen, Gateacre: to be Vicar, St Andrew, Clubmoor (Liverpool).
The Rev Phyllis Manhood, Priest-in-charge, St Augustin, Bournemouth (Winchester): to be also an Honorary Canon of Winchester Cathedral (Winchester).
The Rev David Murdoch, Rector, Shirland: to be Priest-in-charge, New Mills (Derby).
The Rev David Palmer, Vicar, St Matthias, Stocksbridge (Sheffield): to be Priest-in-charge, Seaton Hirst (Newcastle).
The Rev Malcolm Pickering, Vicar, Marton, Blackpool (Blackburn): to be Priest-in-charge, Badingham w Bruisyard, Cransfield and Dennington (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich).

Weekend birthdays

TODAY:
Professor Victoria Bruce, psychologist, 44; Miss Grace Bumbry, opera and concert singer, 60; Mr Alexander Chancellor, journalist, 57; Miss Rosalie Crutchley, actress, 75; Mr Alan Dyer, former Chief Constable, Bedfordshire, 63; Mr Guy Forget, tennis player, 32;
Mr Abe Hamilton, fashion designer, 35; Professor K.J. Hancock, economist, 62; Lieutenant-Commander Sir Ian Clark Hutchison, 94; Professor B. Josephson, FRS, physicist, 57; Air Vice-Marshal R.H. Kyle, 54; Professor L.E. Lanyon, Principal, Royal Veterinary College, 53; the Hon Diana Makgill, civil servant, 67; Miss Margaret Marshall, opera and concert singer, 48; Mr Floyd Patterson, boxer, 62;



Iain Cuthbertson, the actor, is 67 today; Jan Leeming, the broadcaster, will be 55 tomorrow

Mr Nicholas Payne, director, Royal Opera, Covent Garden, 52; the Earl of Ranfurly, 68; Mr T.J. Rix, publisher, 63; the Rev Edward Rogers, former Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, 88; Sir Alan Thomas, civil servant, 54; Sir Colin Turner, former MP, 75; Mrs Audrey Wise, MP, 62.

TOMORROW:
The King of Spain celebrates his 59th birthday, and the Grand Duke of Luxembourg his 76th birthday.
Mr Alfred Brendel, KBE, concert pianist, 66; Mr Tom Burke, environmentalist, 50; Mr Terry Davis, MP, 59; the Earl of Dudley, 77; Sir Frank Hartley, former Vice-Chancellor, London University, 86; Sir Alan Hume, civil servant, 84; Miss Diane Keaton, actress, 51; Lord Kingsdown, KG, 70; Mr Maurizio Pollini, pianist, 55; Sir Norman Price, former chairman, Board of Inland Revenue, 82; Major-General H. Quinlan, 91; General Sir Michael Rose, 57; General Sir John Stibbon, 62; the Hon Mrs Alison Wright, director-general, British Invisibles, 52; Lord Wynford, 80.

Anniversaries

TODAY
BIRTHS:
James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh 1625-56, chronologist, Dublin, 1581; Giovanni Pergolesi, composer, Jesi, Italy, 1710; Jacob Grimm, philologist and folk-tale collector, Hanau, Germany, 1785; Louis Braille, inventor of the reading system for the blind, Coupvray, France, 1809; Sir Isaac Pitman, inventor of a shorthand system, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, 1813; Augustus John, painter, Tenby, Pembrokeshire, 1878.

DEATHS:
Stephen Hales, clergyman, pioneer of plant physiology, Teddington, Middlesex, 1761; Joseph John Gurney, philanthropist and writer, 1847; Cornelius Vanderbilt, financier, New York, 1877; Charles Keene, artist, Hammersmith, 1891; Benito Goldos, novelist and dramatist, Madrid, 1920; Henri Bergson, philosopher, Nobel laureate 1928, Paris, 1941; Albert Camus, novelist, Nobel laureate 1957, Sens, France, 1960; Erwin Schrodinger, physicist, Nobel laureate 1933, Vienna, 1961; T.S. Eliot, poet, Nobel laureate 1948, London, 1965; Donald Campbell, killed when his speedboat crashed on Coniston Water, Cumbria, 1967; Joy Adamson, naturalist and writer, Shaba Game Reserve, Kenya, 1980; Christopher Isherwood, novelist, California, 1986.

The Fabian Society was founded, 1884.

The first successful appendix operation was performed by Dr Williams West Grant in Iowa, 1885.

Chinese Communists captured Seoul during the Korean War, 1951.

Rose Heilbron became the first woman to sit as a judge at the Old Bailey, 1972.

TOMORROW
BIRTHS:
Jean-Baptiste Say, political economist, Lyons, 1767; Robert Morrison, founder of Protestant missions in China, Morpeth, 1782; John Burke, genealogist and founder of Burke's Peerage, 1787; King Camp Gillette, inventor of the safety razor, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, 1855; Konrad Adenauer, 1st Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany 1949-63, Cologne, 1876; Humbert Wolfe, poet, Milan, 1886, (he also died on January 5, London, 1940); Jack Lovelock, surgeon and Olympic 1,500m gold medallist (1936), Cushington, New Zealand, 1910; Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan 1971-77, Larkana, India, 1928.

DEATHS:
Edward the Confessor, King of England reigned 1042-66, London, 1066; Joseph Gillot, pioneer of the steel pen, Birmingham, 1873; Sir Ernest Shackleton, explorer, South Georgia, Antarctica, 1922; Calvin Coolidge, 30th American President 1923-29, Northampton, Massachusetts, 1933; Amy Johnson, aviatrix, on a flight across the Thames Estuary, 1941; Sonny Liston, boxer, Las Vegas, 1971.

Pope Paul VI met Patriarch Athenagoras I in Jerusalem, the first meeting between the leaders of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches in more than 500 years, 1964.

One-day cricket was born when England played Australia at Melbourne because the Test match had been abandoned after the previous day's rain, 1971.

Latest wills

The Hon Simon Weinstock, of London SW7, left estate valued at £47,398,765 net. He left his estate mostly to relatives and all his racing interests to his father Lord Weinstock.

The Hon Lady Bower, of Headbourne Worthy, Winchester, Hampshire, left estate valued at £405,105 net.
She left £500 to St Peter's Church, St Mary Bourne, nr Andover, Hampshire.

Oliver George Whittington, of Llandaff, Cardiff, South Glamorgan, left £933,018 net.

John Alan Ledger, of Wilmington, Honiton, Devon, left £826,572 net.

Lucille Henriette Chaplin, of Rogate, Petersfield, Hampshire, left £797,664 net.

Rosemary Joan Cecil Watson, of Crondall, Farnham, Surrey, left £647,936 net.

Adelaide Jean Jardine, of Bushey, Hertfordshire, left £560,807 net.

Peter Norman Blackaby, of Walton on Thames, left £579,333 net.

Bernard Ernest Eaton, of Redhill, Nottingham, left £579,865 net.

Patricia Jean Martin, of Salisbury, Wiltshire, left £643,390 net.
She left shares in her estate to the National Trust.

Forthcoming marriages

The Hon A.F. Needham and Miss L.J. Stephenson
The engagement is announced between Andrew, younger son of the Right Hon and Mrs Richard Needham, of London, SW1, and Lindsay, daughter of Mr and Mrs Lance Stephenson, of Thompson, Norfolk.

The Hon Andrew Jolliffe and Miss D.J. Teare
The engagement is announced between Andrew, younger son of Lord and Lady Hylton, of Ammerdown, Somerset, and Diana, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Clifford Teare, of Ramsey, Isle of Man.

Mr R.A. Adams and Dr D.H. Fullerton
The engagement is announced between Ross, younger son of Mr and Mrs G.B. Adams, of Sydney, NSW, and Diana, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs P.G.P.D. Fullerton, of Cuddesdon, Oxfordshire.

Mr G. Bamert and Miss S. Dee
The engagement is announced between Gregor, only son of Mr and Mrs Matthias Bamert, of London and Switzerland, and Samantha, eldest daughter of Mr Michael Dee, of Jersey, and Mrs Pamela Dee, of Gloucestershire.

Mr E.J. Christie and Miss A.J. Lagden
The engagement is announced between Edward, younger son of Mr and Mrs Martin Christie, of Bristol, and Annabel, daughter of Mr and Mrs Timothy Lagden, of Speldhurst, Kent.

Mr R. Cottam and Miss D. Mason
The engagement is announced between Ron, son of Mr and Mrs Ronald Cottam, of Cutnall Green, and Dee, daughter of Mr and Mrs George Mason, of Hartlebury.

Mr M.C. Dautlich and Miss E.K. Booth
The engagement is announced between Marc Christian, elder son of Mr Wilfried Dautlich, of Dulwich, and Mrs Ethel Ingegard Dautlich, of Brighton, and Elinor Katherine, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs John Booth, of Wimbledon.

Dr A.J. Donne and Dr R.L. Gray
The engagement is announced between Adam, son of Mr and Mrs Adam Donne, of Crewe, Cheshire, and Rosemary, daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel and Mrs Stephen Gray, of Radlett, Hertfordshire.

Mr A.D. Dunsmore and Miss R.C. Stevenson
The engagement is announced between Alan, elder son of Mr and Mrs Kenneth Dunsmore, of Paisley, Renfrewshire, and Rachel, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Hugh Stevenson, of Ascot, Berkshire.

Mr R.W. Stewart and Miss C.L. Henry
The engagement is announced between Robert, son of Dr and Mrs Alan Stewart, of Lymington, Hampshire, and Claire, daughter of Mr and Mrs Gerard Henry, of Campsie Glen, Stirlingshire.

Lieutenant M.J. Williams, RN, and Miss R. Amin-Amin
The engagement is announced between Mervyn John, only son of Mr and Mrs M. Williams, of Maidstone, Kent, and Rebecca, only daughter of Mr and Mrs F. Amin-Amin, of Kenley, Surrey.

Major J.M. Hamilton, KOSB, retd, and Miss M.K.S. Bryden
The engagement is announced between Michael Hamilton, of 2 Learmonth Court, Edinburgh, and Mary Katherine Stewart, second daughter of Mr and Mrs G.S. Bryden, of Mansfield, Melrose.

Mr D.J.F.E. Harlow and Miss D.J. Steel
The engagement is announced between Dominic, eldest son of Mr C. Harlow, of Kendal, and Mrs L. Morgan, of Bristol, and Deborah, eldest daughter of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs R. Steel, of Upper Welland, Worcestershire.

Mr M.R. McMaster and Miss R.E. Howard
The engagement is announced between Michael Robert, elder son of Professor and Mrs Paul McMaster, of Moseley, Birmingham, and Rachel Elizabeth, daughter of Mr and Mrs Ivan Howard, of Hodge Hill, Birmingham.

Mr C.H. Morton and Miss G.L. Norgaard Jensen
The engagement is announced between Clive, only son of Mr and Mrs G.H. Morton, of March, Cambridgeshire, and Georgia, eldest daughter of Mr J. Norgaard Jensen, of Paris, and Mrs K.V. Jensen, of London.

Mr M.G. Rhodes and Miss M.R. Mackenzie Smith
The engagement is announced between Matthew, elder son of Mr Robert Rhodes, QC, and Mrs Mark Lowenthal, of London, and Margaret, younger daughter of the late Mr David Mackenzie Smith and of Mrs David Mackenzie Smith, of Nethybridge, Inverness-shire.

Mr R.J. Sutcliffe and Miss A.K. Greenslade
The engagement is announced between Richard, younger son of Mr and Mrs Alan Sutcliffe, of Kendal, Cumbria, and Andrea, elder daughter of Mr David Greenslade, of Sevenoaks, Kent, and of the late Mrs Gisela Greenslade.

Mr J.J. Waters and Miss F.S. Baldwin
The engagement is announced between Jeffrey, elder son of Mr and Mrs Leslie Waters, of Brisbane, Australia, and Fiona, twin daughter of Mr and Mrs Julian Baldwin, of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.

Mr D.J. Willis and Miss N.I'E. Lloyd
The engagement is announced between David John, only son of Mr and Mrs J. Willis, of Marlow, Buckinghamshire, and Nicola l'Estrange, only daughter of Captain G.C. Lloyd, CBE, RN, of Petersfield, Hampshire, and of the late Mrs Suzanne Lloyd.

Mr S.N.M. Woods and Miss K.E. Brookes
The engagement is announced between Simon, son of Mr and Mrs Michael Woods, of Wimbledon, London, and Karis, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Raymond Brookes, of Blackheath, London.

Mr S.P. Yeandle and Miss L.A. Carter
The engagement is announced between Simon, son of Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Yeandle, of Bethersden, Kent, and Louise, daughter of Mr and Mrs Bruce Carter, of Queanbeyan, New South Wales, Australia.

University news

Cambridge
Corpus Christi College
Elected into Honorary Fellowships: Sir Campbell Adamson, Professor Richard Gregory, FRS, Mrs Dorothy Donnelley.

London School of Economics
The following have been elected Honorary Fellows:
Dr John Ashworth, Chairman, British Library Board, Director, Granada Group, Director, J Sainsbury; Lord Bauer, FBA, LSE Professor Emeritus; Mr Charles Yeh Kwong Lee, Lawyer, Member of the Council of the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong; Lord Roll of Ipsden, President, S G Warburg; Vivien Stern, Former Director, National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, Member, Advisory Council, Cambridge Institute of Criminology, Member, Advisory Council, [illegible] Studies Institute; Professor Sir Edward Anthony Wrigley, FBA, Master, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Professor of Economic History, Cambridge.

Church services tomorrow

Second Sunday after Christmas
ST ANDREWS CATHEDRAL, ABERDEEN: 8 HC; 10.15 S Euch; 6.30 Choral E.
BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 9 MP; 9.15 HC; 11 Choral Euch, Leicester Service (Sumsion), O magnum mysterium (Morales), The Archdeacon of Aston: 4 Choral E, The Lord is King (Boyce).
BRECON CATHEDRAL: 8 Holy Euch; 11 M, Te Deum (Stanford in B flat), Love came down at Christmas (Bullock), Rev M Butchelor: 3.30 E, Tertius Noble in B minor. On this day earth shall ring (Stewart).
BRISTOL CATHEDRAL, College Green: 7.40 M; 8 HC; 10 Choral Euch; 3.30 Choral E.
CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 M; 10.15 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Palestrina). Thou knowest Lord (Purcell), The Archdeacon of Canterbury: 3.15 E, Moeran in D. Christus factus est (Bruckner); 6.30 Compline, Rev Dr M Chandler.
CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 7.45 M; 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch. Wie schon leuchtet der Morgenstern (Bach); Aston in F. Eastern monarchs (Lang). The Dean: 3 E.
CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8 HC, Canon B Thompson; 9.30 Euch, Canon B Thompson; 11.15 S Euch, Canon D Knight; 6 Choral E, Rev I Moody.
CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10 Family Euch, Aston in F. God be in my head (Rutter), Canon J Newcome; 11.30 Choral M, Te Deum (Dyson in F). When Jesus our Lord (Mendelssohn), Canon J Griffith; 3.30 Choral E for the Eve of the Epiphany with devotion at the Crib, George Dyson in F, The Three Kings (Cornelius); 6.30 ES, Canon Dr T Dennis.
CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M, Te Deum (Vaughan Williams in G), Jubilate (Britten in C). Joys seven (arr. Fletcher), The Precentor: 11 S Euch of the Epiphany, Ireland in C. Infant Holy (arr. Willcocks), Rev P Bide: 3.30 E; 6 Epiphany Procession.
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Oxford: 8 HC; 10 M & Sermon, Canon Jeffery; 11.15 S Euch, Missa O Magnum Mysterium (Victoria), O little one sweet (Bach), Canon O'Donovan: 6 E, Dyson in D. This starry stranger (Drayton).
COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 7.40 MP; 8 Communion; 10.30 Euch, Darke in E. Break forth O beauteous heav'nly light (Bach). Nativity Carol (Rutter). In the bleak midwinter (Darke), Canon C Lamb: 5 E & Procession. All my heart this night rejoices (Ebeling), Sumsion in G. The three Kings (Cornelius), What can I give him (Wright).
DURHAM CATHEDRAL: 8 HC, The Dean: 10 M, Canon S Pedley: 11.15 HC, Canon D Brown, 3.30 E.
ELY CATHEDRAL: 8.15 HC, Rev J McFarlane: 10.30 S Euch, Mass a 4 voci (Monteverdi), Resonet in laudibus (Handl), Jesu dulcedo cordium (Madden), The Precentor: 3.45 E, Fauxbourdon (Holmes), The three Kings (Cornelius).
EXETER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch, Ding dong merrily on high (trad), Ireland in C. O little one sweet (Bach), Rev R Carter; 11.15 M, Te Deum (Smart in F), Torches (Joubert), The Treasurer: 3 E, Looys ee Loose (Komitas): 6.30 Nativity Carol (Rutter), The Dean, S Euch, M & ES sung by Voluntary Choir, E sung by Chorus.
GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: 8, 12.15 HC; 10.15 Euch, Wiltshire Service (Shephard), Canon R Grey: 3 E, Walmisley in D minor, Tomorrow shall be my Dancing Day (Gardener).
GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC, Rev Prof D Martin; 9.45 S Euch, Casseda in E minor, Regis tharsis (Sheppard), The Dean: 11.15 M, Jubilate in E (Somervelle), Bethlehem Down (Warlock), Canon Dr M Palmer: 6.30 E, Harwood in A flat. Whence is that goodly fragrance (McPhee), Rev D Rhodes.
LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 MP; 10.30 S Euch: 4 Choral E.
LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Darke in F. The shepherd's farewell (Berlioz), The Chancellor: 3.30 E, Responses (Rose), Dyson in D. Mary's lullaby (Rutter).
LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: 7.45 L; 8, 12.30 HC; 9.30 S Euch, Missa O quam gloriosum (Victoria). In the bleak midwinter (Darke), The Subdean: 11.15 M, Collegium regale (Howells). The blessed Son of God (Vaughan Williams), Canon John Hanson: 3.45 E, Vann in E minor, A child is born in Bethlehem (Moorse).
LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL: 8 MP & HC; 10.30 Euch, The Dean: 3 Choral E, Canon M Wolfe: 4 HC.
MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8.45 MP; 9 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Darke in F, Ave verum corpus, Canon P Denby: 6.30 E.
NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 Sung Euch, Mr D Harte: 6 Choral E.
NEWPORT CATHEDRAL: 10.30 S Euch, Missa in Simpliciare (Langlais). God so loved the world (Stainer): 6.30 Choral E, Brewer in D. A Gaelic Blessing (Rutter)
NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8, 9.15 HC, 10.30 S Euch, Casciolini in A minor, There is a rose (Vann). A babe, I wyse (Bainton), Canon M Perham: 3.30 Festal E of the Epiphany & Procession to the Crib, Wood in D. Eastern monarchs (Long), Mary's lullaby (Rutter). Whence is that goodly fragrance (anon. trad). The Archdeacon: 6.30 Compline.
PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M; 8.15 HC; 10.30 Euch, Harwood in A flat, The Treasurer: 3.30 E, Stanford in C. Eastern monarchs (Lang).
PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Parish Euch, Mass of St Thomas (Thorne), Mar D Lang: 6.30 E, Canon A Winterbotham.
RIPON CATHEDRAL: 8 Euch: 9 Parish Euch, Rev P Driver: 11.30 M; 12.30 Euch, Canon E Exson: 5.30 E, Canon M Glanville-Smith.
SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch, Regina Coeli (Victoria), Ab ortu solis (Byrd), Canon J Osborne: 11.30 M, Canon P Roberts: 3 E, Responses (Bernard Rose), Chichester service (Archer): 5.30 Ordination, Salisbury Singers, Regina Coeli (Victoria), Ab ortu solis (Byrd), The Bishop.
SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 MP; 10.30 Sung Euch; 6.30 E, The Archdeacon.
SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Euch, Canon H Cunliffe; 11 Choral Euch, Darke in F, A maiden most gentle (arr Carter), Nativity Carol (Rutter), Canon H Cunliffe; 3 Choral E, Stanford in C. The little road to Bethlehem (Michael Head), The Provost; 6.30 Choral Euch, Missa Brevis (Palestrina), Magi viderunt stellam (Victoria), The Provost.
TRURO CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9 M; 10 Sung Euch, Darke in F. The Three Kings (Cornelius), The Dean; 6 E, Wood in E flat (no 2), "Say, where is he born?" (Mendelssohn), The Librarian.
WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 Parish C, New Year Carol (Britten), Canon I Knox; 11 Solemn Euch, Wood in the Phrygian mode, A song on the birth of Christ (Turner), Canon D Baxter; 4 Solemn E, Hylton Stewart in C. The Three Kings (Cornelius), Canon G Nairn-Briggs.
WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10.30 M, Jubilate (Boyce), The star song (Leighton), Rev E Pruen; 11.30 Sung Euch, Missa, O magnum mysterium (Victoria); 3.30 E, Bethlehem Down (Warlock), Canon P Morgan.
YORK MINSTER: 8, 8.45 HC; 9.30 M; 10 Sung Euch, Darke in E, Canon Professor E Norman; 11.30 Sung Euch, Harwood in A flat; 4 E, Murrill in E. In dulci jubilo (arr Pearsall), The Dean.
ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL, Clwyd: 8 HC; 11 Choral Euch, Darke in E. Videntes stellam (Poulenc), The Dean; 3.30 Choral E, When Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Mendelssohn).
ST EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC, Canon Marion Mingins; 10 Sung Euch, Mathias in C. Lute Book Lullaby (trad), Canon Martin Shaw; 11.30 Choral M, Canticles: Britten in C. Lute Book Lullaby; 3.30 Choral E, All they from Saba shall come (Handl), Canticles, Noble in B minor.
ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, London: 8 HC; 8.45 M; 11 Sung Euch, Missa brevis (Britten), Hodie Christus natus est (plainsong), Wolcum Yole (Britten), In the bleak midwinter (Britten), The Chancellor; 3.15 E, St Paul's Service (Blatchly), Rev B Coleman.
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, Ennismore Gardens, London, SW7: 10.30 Divine Liturgy, Kievan and traditional polyphony, Diocesan Bishop Met. Anthony.
ALL SAINTS, Margaret Street, W1: 8, 5.15 LM; 10.20 EP; 11 HM, Collegium regale (Howells), Rev I E Davies: 4.30 EP; 6 Lessons and carols for Advent.
ALL SOULS, Langham Place, W1: 9 HC; 11 Canon J Chapman; 6.30 Canon J Chapman.
THE ASSUMPTION, Warwick Street, W1: 11 Missa O magnum mysterium (Vittoria), Resonent in laudibus (Handl), Christmas song (Praetorius).
CHELSEA OLD CHURCH, SW3: 8 HC; 10 Children's serv; 11 Parish C, Rev Dr P Elvy; 6 E, Rev D Bean.
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH, Curzon St, W1: 11 Sunday School.
CROWN COURT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, Covent Garden, WC2: 11.15 Rev S Hood; 12.20 HC; 6.30 Rev S Hood.
FARM STREET, W1: 8, 9.30, 12.30, 4.15, 6.15 LM; 11 HM.
HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON, Brompton Road, SW7: 9 ASB HC, Rev S Downham; 11 M, Mr J Jennings; 5, 7 Informal S, Mr Tim Stillwell.
THE ORATORY, Brompton Road, SW7: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Mass, 12.30, 4.30, 7; 3.30 V & B.
ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH: Iverna Gdns, W8: 11 Holy Mass, Archbishop Y Gizirian.
WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL (Methodist), SW1: 11 Covenant & HC, Rev Dr P Graves; 6.30 New Year Worship, Rev E Fletcher.
ST ANNE AND ST AGNES (Lutheran), Gresham St, EC2: 11 Choral Euch, Rev Paul D Schmiege; 2 Swahili HC, Rev John Shabaya; 7 Bach Christmas Mass, Leccasaldi Ensemble, Rev R T Englund.
ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT, Smithfield, EC1: 9 HC; 11 Choral Euch, Missa Lapidaverunt Stephanum (Ludford), The Rector; 6.30 E, Fifth Service (Tomkins), Then shall a star (Mendelssohn), The Rector.
ST BRIDE'S, Fleet Street, EC4: 11 Choral M & Euch, Jubilate (Gibbons 2nd service), Stanford in A, Dormi Jesu (Beechey), Canon J Oates; 6.30 Choral E, Magnificat/Nunc Dimittis (Andrews in D), Balulalow (Warlock), Canon J Oates.
ST CLEMENT DANES: 11 Choral Euch, Missa Aeterna Christi Munera (Palestrina), Vox in Rama (Dering), Rev P Bishop.
ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, Pont Street, SW1: 11 Rev W Cairns; 6.30 Rev W Cairns.
ST ETHELDREDA'S, Ely Place: 11 S Mass, Missa Bella Amfitrit Altera (Lassus), Omnes de Saba (Handl).
ST JAMES'S, Sussex Gardens, W2: 8 Euch; 10.30 S Euch, Missa Quaeramus cum Pastoribus (Morales), The Three Kings (Cornelius), Rev B Wilson; 6 Choral E, Short Service (Weelkes), En natus est (Praetorius).
ST JAMES'S, Piccadilly: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch, Rev D Reeves; 5.45 EP.
ST JOHN'S, Stratford E15: 11 Family Communion, In din ist Freude (Bach), Rev D Richards; 6.30 Evening Prayer & Praise, Rev D Richards.
ST LUKE'S, Chelsea, SW3: 10.30 S Euch, Lully lulla (Leighton), Rev Sis Teresa; 12.15 HC; 6.30 E, The Three Kings (Cornelius), Rev L Marabula.
ST MARK'S, Regents Park Rd, NW1: 8 HC; 9.45 Family Communion; 11 S Euch, Missa a 4 (Monteverdi), Lo star led chiefs (Crotch), Rev T Jones.
ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, WC2: 8 HC; 9.45 Euch, Ven B Jacob; 11.30 Visitors, Rev C Herbert; 12.30 HC, Rev C Herbert; 2.45 Chinese, Rev G Lee; 6.30 Evening, The Vicar.
ST MARY'S, Bourne Street, SW1: 9, 10, 7 LM; 11 HM, Missa brevis in D minor (Mozart), Fr S Young; 6 An Epiphany Devotion & Solemn Benediction.
ST MARY-THE-VIRGIN, Primrose Hill: 8 HC; 10.30 Parish Euch, Missa Secunda (Hassler), The Three Kings (Cornelius), Rev J Ovenden; 6 Choral E, Stanford in C, Christus (Mendelssohn).
CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AD VINCULA, HM Tower of London: 9.15 HC, Rev P Abram; 11 Epiphany Carols, Rev P R C Abram.
CHAPEL ROYAL, St James's Palace: 8.30 HC; 11.15 S Euch, Jesus Christ, the apple tree (Poston), Rt Rev J Taylor.
CHAPEL ROYAL, Hampton Court Palace: 8.30 HC (1662); 11 Choral Euch, O magnum mysterium (Victoria), Here is the little door (Howells); 3.30 E, Dormi Jesus (Rubbra), Walmisley in D minor, Omnes de Saba venient (Handl).
QUEEN'S CHAPEL OF THE SAVOY, WC2: 11 S Euch, Byrd in three parts, The Chaplain.
THE TEMPLE CHURCH, Fleet Street: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP, Te Deum Laudamus (Thalben-Ball in B flat), Jubilate Deo (Thalben-Ball in B flat), Lo star led chiefs (Crotch), The Master.
GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks, SW1: 11 Choral HC, Stanford in C, A sound of Angels (Tye), Band of the Life Guards, Rev P Bosher.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how often am I to forgive my brother if he goes on wronging me? As many as seven times?" Jesus replied, "I do not say seven times but seventy times seven". Matthew 18 : 21,22.

BIRTHS

AHADPOUR-KHANEGHAH - On 21st December at The Portland Hospital, to Vida and Javid, a daughter, a sister for Koroush.

BLACK - On December 30th, to Andrew and Sharon (née Bridgman), a beautiful daughter, Annabel Tara Merrington.

COTGROVE - On December 30th 1996, to Nicholas and Diane (née Barty), a daughter, Abigail.

DAWKINS - On December 31st 1996 at St Thomas' Hospital, to Teresa and Ian, a son, Charles Timothy, a brother for George.

de CHASTELAI WORMER - On December 31st, to Allison (née Cronnelly) and Mark, a daughter, Gabrielle May.

FOURNIER - On December 27th in Singapore, to Emma (née Daniels) and Philippe, a daughter, Abigail Naomi Gwynne.

GLOVER - On 2nd January, to Tracey and Martin, a son, Toby Reginald, another caddy for daddy and a wish come true for Jack.

HARTE - On Boxing Day, at The Royal Free, Hampstead, to Susan (née Meikle) and Michael, a daughter, Amelia Peace and Wisdom.

HIRATA - On 29th December at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, to Keiko and Hiroyasu, a son, Shinichi.

HODGSON - On 28th December, to Nick and Carolyn (née Dunster), a son, Edward Thomas Andrew, a brother for Emily and Alice.

KHAN - The First New Year baby, born at The Portland Hospital, on January 1st 1997 at 12.06 am to Mahvash and Iftikhar Khan, a precious daughter, a baby sister to Mehak. Welcome to our lives, a new year and Inshallah, a wonderful future. We love you.

KIDD - On 28th December, to Carine and Johnnie (Matthew), twin daughters, Eleanor and Katharine, half-sisters for Alice and Charlie.

LLOYD - On 3rd January 1997, to Caroline (née Pelham-Lane) and Julian, a son, Guy John Pelham.

MELROSE - On 30th December 1996, to Jonathan and Melanie (née Hill), a daughter, Harriet Grace, a sister and accomplice for William.

ROBERTSON - On November 15th in London, to Susan and Graham, a son, Jonathan Hugo Edward Griffin, a brother for James.

SMITH - On January 2nd 1997 at The Royal Sussex Hospital, to Trudie and Charlie, a daughter, Holly Annise.

TURNER - On December 19th at Trafford General Hospital, Manchester, to Leslie (née Donnelly) and Duncan, a beautiful daughter, Lauren Anthea.

VILHELMSEN - On 30th December at The Portland Hospital, to Yvonne and Jan, a son, Christopher.

EMERALD ANNIVERSAIRES

CLARKSON - Frankie and Jeff - round world yachties of Appledore England at St Mary's, Charlton Kings - 5th January 1942.

DEATHS

AITKEN - Harry Kerr MC - Peacefully after a long illness bravely borne on 2nd January at The County Hospital, Griffithstown, Monmouthshire. Service at Gwent Crematorium, Cwmbran on Friday, 10th January at 2.40 pm. Donations if desired to County Hospital (Hanbury Ward).

BELLINI - Beatrice on New Year's Day suddenly and peacefully in Rome.

BAGNALL-WILD - On January 1st 1997 suddenly at home Hillary aged 86 years. Widow of Brigadier R.E. Bagnall-Wild R.E. Loved Matriarch of four generations. Funeral Service at St Peters Church, Hardwick on Thursday 9th January at 10.30 am, followed by private cremation at Earlham Crematorium. Family flowers only please, but donations if desired to St Dunstans Home for the Ex Service Blind, c/o Long Stratton Funeral Service, Flint House, Long Stratton, Norwich, Norfolk.

BORTHWICK - Of that Ilk John Henry Stuart 23rd Lord Borthwick. Peacefully on 30th December 1996, after a short illness, in his 92nd year, loving husband of the late Margaret Frances and father of John and Henry. Service at Borthwick Parish Church, on Tuesday 7th January at 11.30 am. Private interment thereafter. Family flowers only.

CARPENDALE - Douglas Maxwell, on December 30th 1996. Loved husband of Olwen and father of Lucy and Helen. Funeral at Mortlake Crematorium on January 10th at 12.30 pm. Family flowers only.

CHOWN - Phyllis, on December 28th, peacefully at home in Broadway, formerly of Stanmore. Dearly loved wife of Dick and mother of Christine. Private family funeral has taken place.

COTTERELL - Sarah, on 1st January 1997, bravely but gently, so deeply loved. Funeral noon 8th January, The Holy Trinity, Eckington. Flowers or donations, for Royal Marsden Hospital, may be sent to E. Hill, Pershore, WR10 1HZ.

COWAN - William Graham MBE aged 77 peacefully in his home at Fowlis Wester on 1st January 1997, beloved husband of Ann and much loved father of Bill, Archie and Kate and grandfather of Tommy, Harry, Isobel and Lucy. Service of Thanksgiving followed by interment on Tuesday 7th January at Fowlis Wester Parish Church at 1.30 pm. Family flowers only please but donations to the British Lung Foundation, 78 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8JR.

COWEN - Dr. William Wolf, MBE, on 31st December 1996. Beloved husband of the late Sylvia Cowen, father of Michael and Kenneth and grandfather of Adam and David. Cremation Service at Chelmsford Crematorium on Monday 13th January 1997 at 11.45 am. Flowers or donations to Amnesty International British Section Charitable Trust, 99-119 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RE. All enquiries to F. Hardy, tel: (01371) 810324.

DAVIES - David Garrick Owen, of Tauxigny, 37310, Indre-et-Loire, France, on 2nd January 1997, aged 73, after a long illness, beloved husband of Sybil and step-father of Cali. Formerly a Chef de Bureau, Agence France Presse, Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur.

DUKE - Joan (formerly Daly née Seymour), on Thursday 2nd January in her 79th year. Beloved wife of Cecil, beloved mother of Alexandra Bodman and Michael Daly, beloved mother-in-law of Margaret and Josef and loving granny of Edward, Victoria, Douglas, Stephen and Eleanor. Will be sadly missed by her extended family and all her many friends. Service of Thanksgiving at St Leonard's Church, Seaford, at 1.30 pm on Tuesday 14th January, to be followed by cremation at the Eastbourne Crematorium at 2.30 pm. Family flowers only but donations, if desired, to St Wilfrid's Hospice, Eastbourne c/o Seaford and Newhaven Funeral Service, 22 Sutton Road, Seaford, East Sussex, tel: (01323) 893889.

EVANS - The Rt. Revd. Edward Lewis, sometime Bishop of Barbados, died peacefully at Martyn Lodge, Henfield, on Monday December 30th 1996 aged 92. Funeral will take place at St Peter's Church, Woodmancote, at 11am Friday January 10th. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to Codrington College Trust, Barbados, c/o Bishop of Croydon, St Matthew's House, 100 George Street, Croydon, CR0 1PJ.

GAMLEN - Catherine Millicent aged 87 peacefully at St George's Nursing Home, Cobham, Surrey, on 31st December 1996. Ex Sister PTS St Thomas' Hospital, London. A very dear cousin and friend. Cremation Guildford Crematorium at 12.30 pm on January 8th 1997. Thanksgiving Service to be arranged. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to The Nightingale Benevolent Fund c/o James & Thomas Funeral Directors, Mill Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 3AL, tel: (01932) 862009.

GRAHAM - Dr. Christopher Landale, peacefully on 1st January aged 80. General Practitioner for many years in Kensington. Father of Timothy, Melanie and Rosemary and grandfather of Sarah, Emily and Philippa. Funeral Service on Wednesday 8th January at St Columba's Church, Pont Street, SW1 at 2.30 pm followed by cremation at Putney Vale. Family flowers only please. Donations may be made to the Talking Newspapers Association of the UK or Future Hope (UK), c/o Lt. Kenyon, 49 Marloes Road, W8 6LA. Tel: (0171) 937-0757.

HAMMOND - Stanley Frank, peacefully 28th December, aged 83 years. Husband of Anne for 59 years, loved father and grandfather.

HANKIN - William Harvey, Wing Commander DFC, RAF retd, ex British SA Captain, dear husband of Margaret (née Halliwell), father of Jane and Lindy, died on December 27th. Cremation private. No flowers but donations to RAF Benevolent Fund, if desired.

HAWKINS - John Charles. Husband of Shirley, father of Mark, Samantha and Sam, and brother of Peter. Died on 24th December 1996. Humorous, incisive banker and aviator, now pursuing his favourite pastime - flying at a higher level. Funeral Service to be held at Worthing Crematorium, Tuesday 7th January 1997 at 1.20 pm. Donations only to British Heart Foundation, c/o Freeman Bros, 9 North Parade, Horsham, West Sussex.

HINDLE - John Frank FRCS. On 1st January 1997 after a short illness. Beloved husband of Gweno, father of Hugh and Peter and loving Taid of Jenny, Sally, Lucy and Ross. By special request private family cremation on Wednesday 8th January, 4pm at Norse Road Crematorium, Bedford. Service of Thanksgiving to be announced later. Family flowers only, donations, if desired, to either Luton and South Beds Hospice or Masonic Charities may be sent c/o Neville Funeral Service, The Old Church, Flitwick Road, Ampthill, Beds, MK45 2NT. Tel: (01525) 406132.

HOBART-TICHBORNE - Bryan, on 2nd January 1997 in Christchurch, New Zealand, aged 84. Much loved husband of the late Joan Hobart-Tichborne and father of Bryan and Richard. Also grandfather of Benjamin, Hugo, Guy, Bethan and Alice. Previously lived in East Africa for many years and proudly carried on the family motto of Pugna pro Patria. Funeral Service on 6th January 1997.

HYSLOP - Henry, aged 82 of Oxford. Peacefully on Sunday December 29th with his family in Alderley Edge Cheshire. Funeral Mass at St Gregory & St Augustine Catholic Church, Woodstock Road, Oxford on Friday January 10th at 11.30 am. No flowers please but if desired, donations to the Muscular Dystrophy Society c/o Albert R Sinck, 84 South Oak Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 6AT. Tel: 01625 525 063.

LUCAS - Emmeli, died peacefully on New Years Eve. Loving and dearly loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Frances, Edwin, Christine, John and their families.

MARTIN - Geoffrey of Blundellsands, Liverpool, peacefully at the London Clinic on December 30th 1996 aged 76. Served in the Indian Army during World War II. Dearly beloved husband of Pauline, brother-in-law of Winifred and the late Albert Powell. Funeral Service at Southport Crematorium on Monday 13th January at 12 noon. Family flowers only please but donations to The Cats Protection League, Southport and District Branch, may be sent to Broadbents and Seddons Funeral Services, 33 Liverpool Road, Birkdale, PR8 4AG, tel: (01704) 560055.

RADMORE - Victor Charles died suddenly in Cambridge on 31st December. Husband of the late Margaret and father of Pamela and Gillian. Private cremation. A Service of Thanksgiving will be held at the Unitarian Church, Cambridge, on 15th January at 2.30 pm. Family flowers only.

ROGERS - Patrick, dearly beloved husband of Dorothy and father of Clare, suddenly and peacefully at Hangleton, Hove, on 29th December 1996 aged 75. Private cremation. Funeral Service at St Helen's Church, Hangleton, on Thursday 9th January at 2.30 pm. No flowers please. Donations if wished to R.N.L.I. c/o Bungard & Sons Ltd., 90 Sackville Road, Hove, BN3 3HE.

SHAW - Zita Mary on December 30th aged 90 years, after a prolonged illness. Beloved wife of the late Dr. Donald Shawe of Chichester and Brentwood. Loving mother of Christine, Gillian and John, and grandmother to their children. Cremation at Cambridge Crematorium on January 9th at 2.15 pm. Family flowers only, enquiries and donations to the Alzheimer's Disease Society, c/o Alfred Scales Ltd, The Old Fire Station, Buntingford, Herts. SG9 9HT, tel: (01763) 274111.

SINCLAIR - David, Actor, died peacefully 31st December in Hove. Arrangements Woodvale Crematorium, Brighton, January 6th at 1.45pm. No flowers. Donations Cancer Research.

TREVOR - On New Year's Day suddenly at home Charles Edwin Hill-Trevor, 4th Baron Trevor in his 69th year, much loved father of Charles and Iain. Funeral at St Mary's Church, Chirk, at 10.30 am on Friday 10th January 1997 followed by cremation at Pentrebychan, Wrexham. Family flowers only. Donations in lieu to League of Friends Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital and League of Friends of Wrexham Maelor Hospital c/o Edmund Rowlands & Son, Ellesmere House, Field Head, Chirk, Wrexham, (01691) 772462.

WALKER - Suddenly on 1st January 1997 Katherine Ross, youngest daughter of Samuel and Helen Walker, much loved aunt and great-aunt. Funeral Service at Christ Church, Church Crookham, Hampshire, on Wednesday 15th January at 10.30 am, followed by cremation. Friends welcome at the church. Flowers c/o A & W Gudgeon Ltd, East Road, Fleet, Hants, tel: (01252) 616431.

WETTON - Sheila Elizabeth on 1st January at Staplehurst Manor Nursing Home. Widow of Wing Commander W.H. Wetton. Private funeral on 14th January, flowers to Mummary, 31 Devonshire Road, Bexhill, East Sussex, TN40 1AH. A Memorial Service will be held in London in March.

WORK - Constance Elizabeth (Betty), beloved wife of Tommy, much loved aunt and great-aunt, died peacefully 31st December whilst staying with her family in Salisbury. Funeral Service at Isle of Wight Crematorium on Monday, 13th January at 1 pm. All enquiries to D.K. Shergold (01722) 328966.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

MAXTED - A memorial service celebrating the life of John Lewis Maxted (16th February 1916-28th December 1996). Beloved husband of Mona, father of Bill, Oarsman, Solicitor, former Prudential General Manager and Indian Army officer; will be held at St Clement's Church, Townstal, Dartmouth, Devon, on Friday 17th January, at 3.00 pm. No flowers by request, but donations in lieu may be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Dartmouth Rowing Club, 99 Britannia Avenue, Dartmouth, Devon, TQ6 9LP. Further details: Ferring Funeral Service, tel: Dartmouth 832977.

THANKSGIVING SERVICES

BODENHAM - Denis. The Thanksgiving Service will be held on Friday 10th January at The Church of St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, at 12 noon.

IN MEMORIAM — PRIVATE

SUTHERLAND - Christopher 4th January 1995. In constant and ever loving memory.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

ASTONISHING Coincidences, and modern day miracles. If you have a story to tell, this journalist would like to hear it. Please write to Box No 2164.

RE: Gordon Wilfred Amos Deceased - 26 Mildens Court Coldharbour Lane Camberwell London SE5 9QW
Date of Death: 5th July 1996
Missing Persons - would the descendants of Sister "Lily" Amos, last heard of in the Ightham or Seal area or any persons knowing of their whereabouts contact Brachers Solicitors at 1 Tower Mount Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 5AX, for the attention of Miss B Campbell.

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IN MEMORIAM — PRIVATE

ELIOT, THOMAS STEARNS
4th January 1965
"We die with the dying:
See, they depart, and we go with them.
We are born with the dead:
See, they return, and bring us with them."
- Valerie

هكذا من الأصل

OBITUARIES

LADY EMPSON

Lady Empson, widow of Sir William Empson, died on December 22 aged 81. She was born on September 18, 1915.

Sculptor, political activist, adventurer and socialite, Hetta Empson was one of the last of the grand old Bohemians. George Orwell would have left his first wife for her but she told him not to be silly. Instead, for almost forty years, she enjoyed a cheerfully unconventional marriage to the critic and poet, William Empson, giving him the "backing and stiffening" he wanted from a wife until his death in 1984.

In South Africa in the 1930s, she campaigned on behalf of blacks. In London during the war she drove an ambulance through the Blitz and broadcast British propaganda in Afrikaans. In China she backed the Communists at the time of the civil war. And in her postwar Hampstead heyday, as described by Felix Topolski (for whom she had once posed nude), she was "an impressive stomping, far from motherly personage", presiding over a lively salon where the guests ranged from poets to politicians, and even the lodgers seemed destined for distinction.

Hester Henrietta Crouse was born in Kroonstad, a small town in the Orange Free State, where her father was a cattle dealer. Her family traced its ancestry back to a Huguenot refugee named David Sénécal (Senechal), born in Dieppe, who arrived in South Africa in the last decade of the 17th century, married a Parisienne in 1694, and sired 11 children.

Brought up a member of the Dutch Reformed Church ("I'm a lapsed Lutheran"), Hetta studied humanities at Bloemfontein University and went on to Cape Town, where she worked as an apprentice sculptor. Then she took off for Germany, where she studied art in Munich.

On returning to South Africa, she earned her living as publicity manager for a newspaper. She also turned into a left-wing activist, and during a period in Johannesburg became fully involved in the African situation: she organised the laundry workers' union.

When posted to a grim little town in the Northern Transvaal, she befriended the local farming community, which included many Jewish farmers, and persuaded them to give financial support to combat the prevalent Brown Shirt movement. In Cape Town and Johannesburg, she later said, she had come under the influence of "saint-like people" in the Communist movement, and felt inspired by them to "help the blacks to recognise their worth and organise themselves into unions".

But she was also a passionate artist, and longed to visit the galleries of Europe. To that end, she got together with a fellow artist, René Graetz, and they "did a dirty thing" to raise money: they cashed in on the centenary of the Great Trek of 1836 by designing an anniversary tie. After buying just one tie for 1s 6d and selling it for 3s 6d, they were in business, printing ties day and night. As soon as they had amassed £40 each, they took steerage on a steamer. After a while in France and Switzerland, Hetta journeyed alone to London, where she did menial jobs.

On the outbreak of war, she undertook to drive an ambulance for the ARP, which she continued to do, bravely and resiliently — eight hours on, eight hours off — throughout the eight-and-a-half months of the Blitz that began in September 1940. Because of her pro-Soviet loyalties, she felt unable to take a more active part in the war effort at that stage. But Hitler's betrayal of the Russo-German Pact changed all that.

She answered the BBC's advertisement for a speaker of Afrikaans and became a propagandist. She worked on two regular transmissions: a women's magazine programme, and a pithy propaganda piece, broadcast under the pseudonym Soekie Trottie, aimed at combating German propaganda beamed at South Africa.

It was at the BBC's training unit that she met William Empson. He was attracted by her tall and slender good looks, her vivacity, and force of character; she was taken by his intelligence and wit. They became engaged within a few weeks. When Empson warned her that she would have to go to China if she married him, her only response was: "When?"

George Orwell, their colleague at the BBC, refused to come to the wedding: he wanted Hetta for himself. For her part, Hetta felt devoted to Orwell (and to his wife, Eileen), and loved arguing politics with him — although "I was a Marxist, he was a Trot" — but she had no interest in developing a closer relationship. "I didn't like him enough."

But Orwell's jealousy soon passed. "George was crazy about me for a bit, that's all," she would say. The Empsons and the Orwells remained on good terms even after Eileen's death in 1947, when the Empsons took ship for China.

Hetta found Orwell "enchanting, very imaginative, and very sweet; childlike in a way". She thought it especially revealing of his character that he taught her to construct a hay-box, a device which enabled you to make hot porridge in the evening and keep it warm, cocooned in the hay, till morning: an odd exercise, it seemed to her to be part and parcel of a certain meanness of spirit, an exaggerated thrift which served for self-punishment. Also, much as she found Orwell endearing in many ways, he was what she astutely called a "wrong-footer" — deliberately doing the contrary thing in order to antagonise others.

In China, where William Empson taught for five years at Peking University, Hetta supported the Communist cause in the civil war. Among other activities, she helped persecuted students to escape the purges of the Nationalist Government, by smuggling them through her domestic quarters and into a side street, where they were spirited into neighbouring hospitals to be sheltered by sympathetic doctors. "She saved lives," Empson would say with pride.

During the six-week siege of Peking at the close of 1948, she was accredited as a correspondent for *The Observer*. After witnessing the inauguration of the People's Republic of China, she continued to place faith in the Communist Government throughout the early years of the new regime. Her most accomplished work of art from that period was a bronze bust of Sardar Pannikar, Indian Ambassador to China.

With the years, she developed what Felix Topolski called "her innate dominance". When Empson became Professor of English Literature at the University of Sheffield, Hetta stayed in London, cultivating and assisting artists, writers and politicians from Tambimuttu and Samekula Mulumba to Louis MacNeice and Elizabeth Smart. A legion of "handpicked" lodgers at Studio House in Hampstead included the anarchist and author A. G. (Dinah) Stock, the puppeteer John Wright and the biologist Lewis Wolpert.

Renowned for her statuesque looks and flamboyant gregariousness, Hetta became the cynosure of a large circle and brought a sense of dramatic and often outrageous moment to many social gatherings. Once, at a party, Empson apologised to the writer Charles Osborne for the behaviour of another man. "There's no need for you to apologise," said Osborne. "But there is. He is my wife's lover." An Empson party was an event.

Hetta is survived by two sons from her marriage, both of whom were supplied with three names — one South African, one English and one commemorating a military action on the day of birth — William Hendrik Mogador and Jacobus Arthur Calais. "I was almost called Dago Island," Jacob was given to understand, "because there was fighting there all the day of my birth. But, fortunately for me, news came in at the last minute of the siege of Calais, just before midnight." A third son, Simon, is the offspring of a love affair with the journalist and television producer Peter Duval Smith.

REGGIE COOKE

Lieutenant-Colonel Reginald Cooke, OBE, mountaineer, naturalist and engineer, died on December 27 aged 95. He was born in India on August 31, 1901.

REGGIE COOKE made the first ascent of Kabru in the Himalayas in 1935, reaching the summit alone and without oxygen. At 24,075ft this stood for 18 years as the record for the world's highest solo ascent. His plans to lead the Everest expedition of 1939 had to be shelved because of the outbreak of the Second World War.

Conrad Reginald Cooke was born in Mussoorie, India, where his father was an engineer with the Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway; the family's connections with India went back to the 18th century. Sent to school at Haileybury, where he took a particular interest in science and astronomy, he went on to obtain his engineering diploma at City & Guilds in 1922.

After apprenticeship with Mather & Platt in Manchester and the Post Office, he joined the Indian Post and Telegraphs in 1925, serving as a divisional engineer and then as a director and superintendent of Telegraph Workshops, Alipore. He built and ran the first amateur radio in India (call sign 2HP) and later designed, built and installed the first short-wave wireless link between India and Burma.

In 1930 in Calcutta he married Margaret Alice Walker, daughter of a jute broker, and during home leave at the end of 1932 they bought a De Havilland Gipsy Moth, which he piloted, without navigational aids, from Brooklands all over Britain, before dismantling and shipping it to India in a packing case. Once there, the distances between refuelling stops proved too great and the plane (G-ABYI) was eventually sold to the Bombay Flying Club.

Life in India afforded Cooke the opportunity to pursue his many interests. These included drawing birds (he may have inherited his artistic talent from his great-grandfather, the Victorian marine painter Edward William Cooke, RA); motoring; tiger shooting (which he later came to abhor); orchid collecting; trekking; and touring by elephant through virgin forest in Assam.

He was a keen naturalist, and from his tours he sent various carabids (beetles) to Britain, one of which was named after him — Chlaenius Cookei. In the 1940s, with special permission, he collected butterflies in Sikkim and built up a unique collection of more than 3,000 specimens.

Climbing was his passion. In 1927 he made the second ascent of Kolahoi (known as the "Kashmir Matterhorn") by the East Ridge, descending by a very long glissade down a snow-filled couloir the height of the whole peak to the glacier below. This was followed by the first ascent of Kabru in 1935, in the course of which he took a series of panoramic photographs which were to provide details for the Survey of India sheets 77 and 78. Early in 1937 he climbed Dom Peak in Switzerland, and later that year made a reconnaissance of Kanchenjunga with Lord and Lady Hunt. From this latter expedition, he produced what was claimed to be the earliest known photographic evidence of the Yeti.

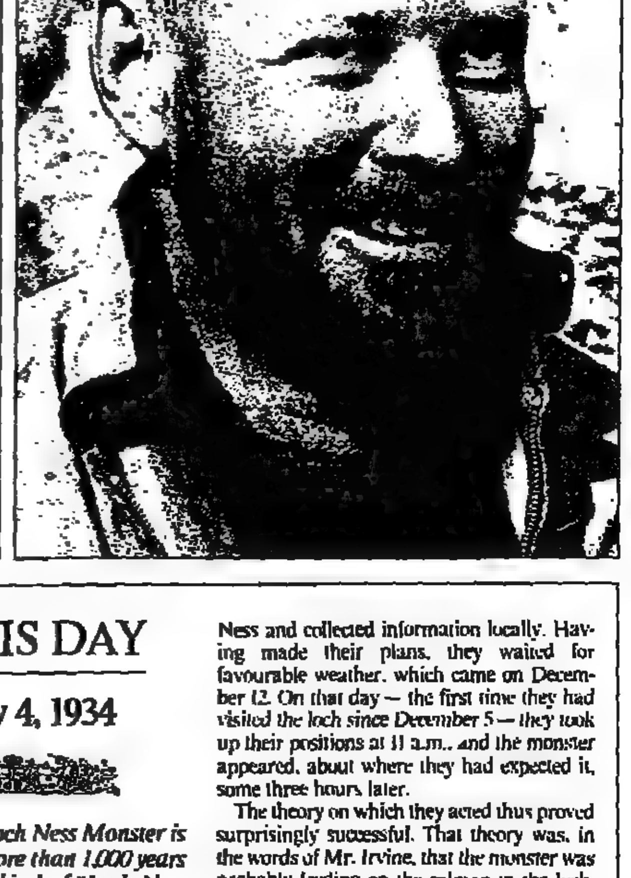
His achievement on Kabru assured him a place in the annals of mountaineering. A founder member of the Mountain Club of India, which later evolved into the Himalayan Club, Cooke became its vice-president and served on the committee for the selection of the team for the successful assault on Everest.

The early part of the war saw Cooke commissioned into the Signals Corps, Rawalpindi, and then transferred to GHQ, Delhi. In 1942 he was sent by flying boat to Cairo, to work out schedules of requirements of telegraph lines and equipment for General Wavell's operations in East Africa and Egypt. This was followed by command of No 2 Battalion, Indian Signal Corps, on the Burma front against the invading Japanese.

Later as Additional Chief Engineer Telegraphs, Cooke was responsible for the post-war Telecommunications Development Plan for the whole of the sub-continent, for which he wrote the official manual. At the partition of India, he joined the Pakistan Government as Chief Engineer Post and Telegraphs. At the end of the war he was awarded the Burma Star and appointed OBE.

In 1948, he returned to Britain and started Westcliff Engineering in Stanstead Abbots, Hertfordshire, which among many other things made and supplied, to his own original design, the high altitude cookers which were used in the first successful ascent of Everest in 1953. In his retirement he concentrated on miniature portrait painting and silversmithing, in both of which he exhibited. His autobiography, *Dust and Snow: Half a Lifetime in India*, was published in 1988.

His first wife died in 1972. In 1974 he married Nancy Abercrombie Mortimore (née Kennedy), widow of Lieutenant Colonel W. G. Mortimore of the Rajputana Rifles. She died in 1984. He is survived by his three daughters.



PETER GARTLAND

Peter Gartland, financial journalist, died after the failure of a kidney transplant on December 27 aged 49. He was born on July 7, 1947.

PETER GARTLAND, a former personal finance editor of *The Times*, helped to revolutionise the coverage of personal finance. Spurred on by the 1980s' boom — and aided by a style that made arcane subjects such as pensions and income bonds accessible even to non-financial readers — he was one of a small band of journalists who led the personal finance pages out of the ghetto in which they had historically existed. In the process he made the topics he wrote about attractive, even compelling.

He was one of the first personal finance journalists to appear regularly on radio and television. Gartland himself liked to joke that his only enduring claim to fame lay in the fact that, along with Roland Rat, he helped to rescue TV-am. His personal finance slot appeared on its breakfast show just after the item featuring the notorious but overwhelmingly popular rat.

Few could have foreseen this apotheosis when, in 1964, Gartland left Gunnersbury Grammar School without a single A level and with only a few O levels. He used to reminisce that the only thing he got from his school was a love for Tottenham Hotspur — on alternate Saturdays a bus would take him and his school friends to White Hart Lane, where he watched the Tottenham team under Danny Blanchflower become the first club this century to win the League and Cup double.

However, he never allowed failure at school to shape his life and in 1969 he returned to his studies, taking a higher national diploma in business studies from Watford College and then going on in 1973 to do an MSc in administrative sciences. His academic work proved of such a high standard that Watford invited him back as a lecturer in business studies.

By this time he had begun to acquire the practical experience of insurance and finance that would prove invaluable, starting with the three years he spent as marketing controller of Zurich Insurance. He was later to become a Fellow of the Chartered Insurance Institute and this expertise proved its usefulness, too, when in 1976 he finally took up full-time journalism, editing *Re-insurance and Post Magazine*, the long-established trade magazine specialising in this field.

It was during this period that he developed his almost encyclopaedic knowledge of the insurance market and he was one of the first journalists to highlight the problems of Lloyd's, long before they hit the headlines. In 1981 he took over as editor of *Money Management*, a monthly magazine analysing the activities of insurance companies, pension funds and other financial institutions. His six-year editorship saw the magazine eclipse its rivals and become the undisputed market leader.

In 1986 he became personal finance editor of *The Times*. The beginning of this period marked the transformation of the personal finance pages — the "big bang" having convinced newspaper managements of the massive advertisement potential in this field. Gartland was soon producing one of the bulkier subsections of the paper — a weekly supplement of 12 or more pages.

What was remarkable was that this was done with little or no full-time back-up staff, Gartland himself writing most of the articles. The pages did dwindle after the stock market crash of October 1987, but that arguably saw Gartland's journalism at its best, as he sought both to inform and reassure terrified personal finance readers who feared that October 1987 would be a rerun of the 1929 Wall Street Ccrash.

At heart Gartland always liked magazine journalism and in 1988 he was lured away by the *Financial Times* to start *The International*, a magazine aimed at the expatriate market. Four years later he decided to branch out on his own with a series of newsletters specialising in the insurance field, and he was publishing these until he died.

He combined his love of journalism and of sport with a strong Roman Catholic faith — inherited from his Irish parents — and in 1991 he travelled with a church group that took a truck full of medicine and food to Romania. His faith kept him strong during his many years of illness. For the last two years of his life he was on dialysis.

He leaves his widow, Angela, whom he married in 1977, a son and a daughter.

PERSONAL COLUMN

BIRTHDAYS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Rachel. You you Shamu, on your 22nd birthday. Best of luck in 97. All my love [illegible]

SERVICES

LET the experts help you to know your Ancestors. Write Achievements founded 1961, Northgate, Canterbury, CT1 1BA(X).

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[illegible] wanted. High cash prices paid. 0171 495 8992 or visit 31 Park Lane W1.

TICKETS FOR SALE

ALL AVAIL. [illegible] B.Adams, P.Collins, C. Dion, Rugby all sport 0171 480 6183

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A BIRTHDAY Newspaper. Original. Superbly presented. Freephone 0800 906609

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A BIRTHDATE Newspaper 1847-1996 in presentation folder £18.00 inc p&p. Newsreel year videos avail. Tel/Fax 01934-412844 9pm 7 days.

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QUALIFIED NANNY REQUIRED;
for family with 3 children: 10 months, 2½ & 3½ years old, living in Singapore.
Telephone before 8th January
01243-535220

SITUATIONS VACANT

WANTED Live-in loving mature mothers helper for 2 small boys to start [illegible]. Must drive and swim. Light housework. Room, bath, also rm with pvt bath in MN USA. Refs a must. Interview call 612 483 6461.

LEGAL NOTICES

FORM 2.8
RULE 2.10
NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION ORDER
A M S Limited
Registered Number: 2844412
Nature of Business: Marketing
Trade Classification: 46
Administration Order Made: 16 December 1996
Joint Administrators: Angus M Martin [illegible] 10-12 East Parade Leeds LS1 2AJ
Deloitte & Touche 10-12 East Parade Leeds LS1 2AJ
Office Holder Numbers: 8231

[illegible] (UK) LIMITED COMPANY NUMBER 3270064
(IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION)
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
On 23 December 1996 the above named company was placed in members' voluntary liquidation and Anthony Victor [illegible] was appointed liquidator by the shareholders. The liquidator gives notice under the provisions of Rule 4.182A of the Insolvency Rules 1986 that the creditors of the companies must send details, in writing, of any claim against the companies to the liquidator, at No1 London Bridge, London SE1 9QL by 27 January 1997 which is the last day for proving claims. The liquidator also gives notice that he will then make a final distribution to creditors and that a creditor who does not make a claim by the date mentioned will not be included in the distribution.
All known creditors have been or will be paid in full.
Date 23 December 1996
AV Lomas
Liquidator

GOODPROUD LIMITED (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION)
Company number: 2496599
NOTICE TO THE CREDITORS OF GOODPROUD LIMITED
On 16 December 1996 the company was placed in members' voluntary liquidation and Peter Norman Spratt of Price Waterhouse was appointed liquidator by the shareholders.
The liquidator gives notice under the provisions of Rule 4.182A of the Insolvency Rules 1986 that the creditors of the company must send details, in writing, of any claim against the company to the liquidator, at Thames Court, 1 Victoria Street, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 1HB by 17 January 1997 which is the last day for proving claims. The liquidator also gives notice that he will then make a final distribution to creditors and that a creditor who does not make a claim by the date mentioned will not be included in the distribution.
The company is able to pay all its known creditors in full.
Date 16 December 1996
PN Spratt
Liquidator
PNS/SC/WMVG01/090LP

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF SOLE LIQUIDATOR AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS TO CLAIM
LIFE PUBLISHING LIMITED
(IN LIQUIDATION)
Principal Trading Address: 45 Station Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 1QH
Company Number 3106810
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Rule 4.106 of the Insolvency Rules 1986 that on 20 December 1996 N G Atkinson was appointed liquidator of the above named company (creditors' voluntary winding up).
Creditors of the company who have not already done so should submit their claims in writing to the liquidator at the following address under reference: ALP/JM/RB
Deloitte & Touche
63 High Street
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 1BQ

Notice of appointment of Administrative Receiver
Track Funding Plc
Registered number 02691482
Trading name(s)
Nature of business: [illegible] receivables
Trade classification
Date of appointment of administrative receiver(s) 24 December 1996
Name of person appointing the administrative receiver(s) The Law Debenture Trust Corporation
Names of Alan John [illegible] Michael David Garcia
administrative receivers
Office Holder No(s) 1095 2360
Addresses No 1 London Bridge London SE1 9QL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COURT & SOCIAL
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Please send Court Page announcements by post/fax to: Mrs J. Noonan, Court & Social Advertising, The Times, PO Box 495, Virginia Street, London E1 9XS.
Tel: 0171 782 7347. Fax 0171 782 7725
Please include in all correspondence: a signature of either one of the parties concerned or a parent, a daytime and home telephone number and address.
Advertisements for the Court Page must be received two working days prior to publication and are accepted subject to confirmation.
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TRUSTEE ACTS

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to s27 of the TRUSTEE Act, 1925 that any person having a CLAIM against or an INTEREST in the ESTATE of any of the deceased person's whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified; after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

PIATEK WROBEL, JAN of 14 [illegible] 1995 particulars to AMHURST BROWN COLOMBOTTI Solicitors of 2 DUKE STREET, ST JAMES'S LONDON SW1Y 6BJ before 8 March 1997

PUBLIC NOTICES

CHARITY COMMISSION
Charity: Trust Property held in connection with the Sisters of the Holy Family otherwise known as The Holy Family Villefranche
Scheme for the amendment of previous Scheme(s)
Reference: AS-233108/51907
The Commissioners propose to make a Scheme for this charity. A copy of the draft Scheme can be seen at Arnold Fooks Chadwick, 15 Bolton Street, Piccadilly, London W1Y 8AR (Ref: [illegible]) or can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to [illegible] 57-60 Haymarket, London, SW1Y 4QX, quoting the above reference. Comments or representations can be made within one month from today.

ON THIS DAY

January 4, 1934

The legend of the Loch Ness Monster is said to date back more than 1,000 years but in the 1930s a kind of "Loch Ness Monster fever" began to spread. It shows little sign of abating today.

THE LOCH NESS MONSTER
EVIDENCE OF THE FILM

The film of the Loch Ness monster was shown privately at the Phoenix Theatre, London, yesterday. A single photograph from the film was printed in *The Times* last Monday, with an account of how the pictures were secured.

That part of the film in which the monster appears occupies the screen for only a minute or two. The creature is seen swimming towards the right, getting farther away as it travels, and is apparently diving just as it leaves the field of view of the camera. There is here no definite evidence of the small, upraised head and long neck to which several eyewitnesses have testified, but the main mass of the body seems to be preceded by a smaller mass, which like the rest is partly under and partly on the surface of the water. The photographers declare that they saw seven or eight humps on the monster's back, and some of these humps are discernible in the film.

The most clearly evident movements are those of a tail or flukes. This appendage is noticeably darker than the body. The photographers describe the general colour of the creature as grey, that of the tail as black. Indeterminate movements of the water beside the monster as it swims suggest the action of something in the nature of fins or paddles.

Before the film was shown the making of it was described to some of the audience by Mr. Malcolm M. Irvine, managing director of Scottish Films Productions of Glasgow. The film was made by Mr. Irvine and two colleagues, Mr. Stanley Clinton and Mr. Scott Hay. Mr. Irvine said that they took their pictures of the monster on December 12, but the fact was kept secret till the film as a whole had been completed and arrangements made for its exhibition.

According to Mr. Irvine, on December 4 and 5 he and his colleagues surveyed Loch Ness and collected information locally. Having made their plans, they waited for favourable weather, which came on December 12. On that day — the first time they had visited the loch since December 5 — they took up their positions at 11 a.m., and the monster appeared, about where they had expected it, some three hours later.

The theory on which they acted thus proved surprisingly successful. That theory was, in the words of Mr. Irvine, that the monster was probably feeding on the salmon in the loch, and must therefore visit the known feeding banks. To approach and leave these areas it would be likely, they argued, to pass through shallow water just off Inverfarigaig, which is about half-way along the east side of Loch Ness. Mr. Irvine had a powerful binocular, and, like each of his colleagues, a cinema camera. He himself was stationed on an eminence, the other two men on the shore about 150 yards from one another, Mr. Irvine being some 400 yards from the nearest of them.

The monster obliged them by swimming past at a distance which, at its shortest, is estimated at 100 yards from the nearest camera. The photographers put the creature's length at 16ft., and its speed at not more than 10 miles an hour.

THE TIMES TODAY

SATURDAY JANUARY 4 1997

NEWS

TV boss bans sleazy series

■ Bruce Gyngell, group managing director of Yorkshire Tyne Tees Television, took a stand against broadcasting sleaze yesterday by banning the documentary series *Hollywood Lovers*.

He has replaced the prime time programmes, which were expected to attract huge ratings, with a travel documentary presented by Alan Whicker .... Page 1

The deep freeze goes on

■ The big chill that has killed more than 200 people across Europe is expected to persist over the weekend, wrecking the sporting programme, although forecasters say the easterly winds responsible for the sub-zero temperatures should relent next week .... Pages 1, 4

England lose again

England's cricketers were beaten again in Zimbabwe, provoking calls to abandon the winter tour and remove the captaincy from Michael Atherton .... Pages 1, 40

Dunblane man free

Parents in Eltham may withhold children from schools after a prisoner who threatened to "do a *Dunblane*" was released ... Page 2

Stalker clue

Detectives hunting the killer of Nicola Dixon, 17, think she may have been stalked from a hospital social club disco .... Page 3

Tide on the turn

After a time in the doldrums, Britain's most exclusive boat builders are racing to meet record demand for their finest yachts .... Page 5

Ghosts of the past

The explorer Sir Wilfred Thesiger, 86, was reunited with two companions at his photographic exhibition in Dubai .... Page 6

Spread the Word

Preachers are invited to submit tapes, no longer than 15 minutes, or texts of sermons for the Preacher of the Year award .... Page 8

Belgrade protests

President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia failed to placate thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators in Belgrade .... Page 9

Letter-bomb warning

The FBI warned Americans about bulky envelopes bearing Egyptian post-marks after an eighth letter-bomb was found .... Page 10

Pakistan council

The interim Administration in Pakistan agreed to set up a national security council after parliamentary elections .... Page 11

Floods in America

Floods raged throughout the western United States forcing many thousands of people to evacuate their homes .... Page 12

Sex and football at the keyboard

■ A survey of secret passwords used by dealers in the City of London to log on to their computers every morning concludes that they are almost twice as likely to use a sexual term, a football team or player, or an insulting nickname for the boss, than the names of their wives or girlfriends .... Page 5

JASPER JUINEN/REUTERS

The 200km Eleven Cities skating tour through Friesland starts at 5.30am today in Leeuwarden. It was last held 11 years ago. Yesterday two skaters passed through Hindeloopen on IJsselmeer: more than 16,000 Dutch enthusiasts are expected to take part in the race. Page 12

OPINION

Nanny state: Far from making an unfair claim on single people, a tax system which supports the family is the best guarantee of a more stable society for all .... Page 17

Global grape: When Keats yearned for a "beaker full of the warm south", could he have guessed how far south the oenological explorers of the northern supermarkets would venture? .... Page 17

LETTERS

Privatisation and Europhilia: snowboards: the "forgotten" Freddy Frinton .... Page 17

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: The Internet helps to disseminate information, but I do not believe it will seriously challenge the printed book .... Page 16

Peter Riddell: Popular capitalism should be a central theme of the Tory campaign — a vote-winning initiative uniting the party .... Page 16

OBITUARIES

Lady Empson, sculptor and widow of Sir William Empson; **Reggie Cooke**, mountaineer and engineer; **Peter Gartland**, financial journalist .... Page 19

BUSINESS

Airbus: European members of the aircraft consortium have agreed how to combat the Boeing and McDonnell Douglas merger .... Page 21

Free shares: More than 2.5 million members of the Woolwich will be told next week how many shares they will receive in the building society's flotation .... Page 21

Markets: The FT-SE 100 rose 32.1 points to close at 4089.5. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from 95.0 to 95.8 after a rise from $1.6907 to $1.6916 and from DM2.6055 to DM2.6345 .... Page 24

Football: Howard Wilkinson is to become technical director of the FA. He will work closely with Glenn Hoddle, the England coach ... Page 38

Weather: Twelve FA Cup third round matches have been postponed. A 9am inspection is planned for the European rugby semi-final at Leicester .... Page 40

Tennis: Tim Henman is in the semi-finals of the Qatar Open after beating Magnus Gustafsson .... Page 39

Racing: Three viewers out of four prefer Channel 4's coverage to the BBC's .... Page 34

Village school: 20th-century art from Anticoli Corrado, a village outside Rome, in a new London exhibition .... Page 15

Flying trapeze: Canada's Cirque du Soleil brings its extraordinary, gravity-defying show back to the Albert Hall .... Page 15

Traffic games: *Beef, No Chicken*, Derek Walcott's farce about traffic, revived at the Tricycle .... Page 15

Insurance claims: driving on ice; Lotus Esprit GT3

SECTIONS

MAGAZINE

Tale teller: Jeanette Winterson .... Page 8
Travel: Matthew Parris in Antarctica .... Pages 17-60
Wine bargains .... Page 64

Weekend

TV cook: Frances Bissell on her series .... Pages 1, 2

Property: homes with fishing rights .... Pages 7-9
Family life: parents who ban swearing .... Page 11

10 15

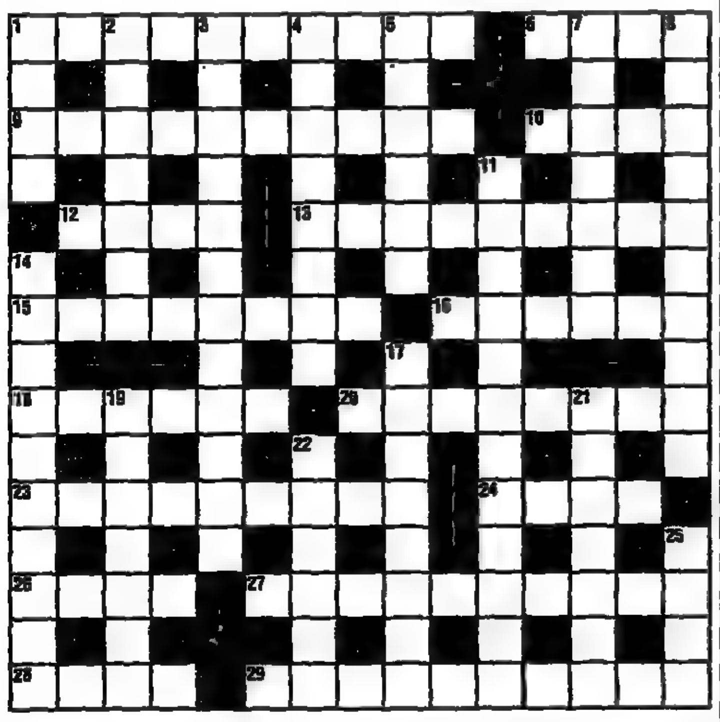
On cue: Paul Hunter, snooker star .... Page 6
Family footsteps: Emilia Fox in *Rebecca* .... Page 8

Food: How to find foodie shops .... Pages 4-6
Books .... Pages 7-12
What's on .... Pages 13-21
TV & radio .... Pages 23-50

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,368

A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The names of the winners and the solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address ....



ACROSS

1 Fisherman might like to, but not one in boat? (5,1,4).
6 Best place to retire (4).
9 He's joined one union, redrafting AGM motions (10).
10 Make trouble in prison (4).
12 Obscure glen, by the sound of it (4).
13 Love woman to win once more (4,5).
15 One found in church (8).
16 Desert bug (6).
18 Rugby forward, chap from Hentzau, booked (6).
20 Taken into the fold, it's fitting one's retired (8).
23 Bond has unfortunately been rude about tail on agent (9).
24 It's used in making sauces in French way, we hear (4).
26 New Age element (4).
27 Short length of road left with linden cut down (10).
28 Genuine German playwright, not British (4).
29 Whatever happens, decathlete should shine here (2,3,5).

DOWN

1 Search for sturdy horse to cover mare (4).
2 Abbot's last to hold Abbey (7).
3 Nervous, like Haman (6,6).
4 Appear to change sides (4,4).
5 Serve a lemon, perhaps (6).
7 Prepared to argue and shock (7).
8 Exceptionally high water for this time of year? (10).
11 I can assure you time of market has been changed (4,2,4,2).
14 Run into audacity and recklessness (10).
17 In scrummage, Llanelli find all-round team leader (8).
19 Scots variations for cooking rib chop (7).
21 One used to keep coal in sink (7).
22 Second-class marriage — that's a sore point (6).
25 Attend thrash (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,362

APPEASE CEILIDH
B L D X A N N O
AVAIL TAKESTEPS
N U I R E O P I
DASHBOARD LETHE
O I T Y V R
NABOB ITINERARY
L O M D N L
FREEWHEEL TACET
T L E H E
NOBLE SCHOONERS
E R R T A V M T
SOUTHDOWN ANIMA
S T A O D T S T
EJECTED SCEPTRE

Solution to Puzzle No 20,367

SPECIFIC FEEBLE
R O A O A E Y
PERMIT VERONESE
S E H E O H S
ZEROHOUR UPPISH
N F M O C V A
STUFF ONTHEMENU
E I A E E A E
POOTERISH DIVAS
A R R T S L C
RIALTO ROLLOVER
A T G A O R T
TROCHAIC GODSON
E R T K A E N
SCYTHE SUNDRIES

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: F Hutton, Stapleford, Nottinghamshire; S J Gigg, Leatherhead, Surrey; K Logan, Exeter, Devon; D Phillips, Stonesfield, Oxon; C Pascall, Greetland, Halifax, West Yorkshire.

We regret that this year, *The Times* will *not* run the annual Crossword Championship.

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AA INFORMATION

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N. East	416 339		
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HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY

Sun rises: 8.06 am	Sun sets: 4.04 pm
Moon sets 12.44 pm	Moon rises 2.27 am

New moon January 9

London 4.06 pm to 8.05 am
Bristol 4.16 pm to 8.15 am
Edinburgh 3.53 pm to 8.42 am
Manchester 4.04 pm to 8.24 am
Penzance 4.34 pm to 8.21 am

TOMORROW

Sun rises: 8.05 am	Sun sets: 4.07 pm
Moon sets 1.19 pm	Moon rises 3.36 am

New moon January 9

London 4.07 pm to 8.05 am
Bristol 4.17 pm to 8.15 am
Edinburgh 3.55 pm to 8.42 am
Manchester 4.05 pm to 8.27 am
Penzance 4.35 pm to 8.20 am

HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	8.37	5.7	9.27	6.0
Aberdeen	9.00	3.5	9.20	3.6
Avonmouth	1.45	9.8	2.21	10.2
Belfast	6.17	2.9	6.40	2.1
Cardiff	1.31	9.2	2.07	9.6
Devonport	0.29	4.4	12.54	4.5
Dover	6.04	5.5	6.41	5.4
Dublin (N Wall)	7.18	3.4	7.46	3.4
Falmouth	—	4.2	12.25	4.3
Greenock	8.02	2.8	7.56	2.9
Harwich	6.38	3.3	7.26	3.3
Holyhead	5.50	4.5	6.13	4.7
Hull (Albert D)	1.06	7.2	1.54	7.2
Ilfracombe	0.49	7.0	1.19	7.2
King's Lynn	1.02	5.1	1.59	5.0
Leith	10.02	4.6	10.28	4.6
Liverpool	6.24	7.5	6.52	7.7
Lowestoft	4.29	2.4	5.33	2.2
Margate	6.58	3.9	7.44	4.0
Milford Haven	1.08	5.3	1.37	5.4
Newquay	0.09	5.4	12.32	5.5
Oban	1.25	3.0	1.29	3.2
Penzance	—	—	12.05	4.5
Portland	1.24	1.4	1.47	1.5
Portsmouth	6.43	4.0	7.12	3.5
Shoreham	6.11	5.0	6.49	4.9
Southampton	5.54	3.9	6.24	3.8
Swansea	1.15	7.2	1.45	7.4
Tees	11.22	4.3	11.44	4.4
Walton-on-Naze	6.39	3.4	7.27	3.4

All times GMT. Heights in metres.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Stornoway, Western Isles, 5C (41F); lowest day max: High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, -3C (27F); highest rainfall: Boulmer, Northumberland, 0.25in; highest sunshine: Newquay, Cornwall, 6.3hr

FORECAST

☐ **General:** England and Wales will remain very cold. Southern England and South Wales will be cloudy with snow showers but should slowly brighten from the North East. Remaining northern parts fairly bright and mostly dry, although with a few light showers near eastern coasts.

Northern Ireland and Scotland will be cold, with most parts dry and quite bright. Cloud and rain reaching Shetland around early afternoon will spread down the eastern side of Scotland during the evening.

☐ **London, SE, Cent S, SW England, E Anglia, Midlands, Channel Is, S Wales:** Mainly cloudy with snow showers, becoming drier later with some brightness. Wind northeast fresh, decreasing later. Very cold. Max 1C to 3C (34F to 37F).

☐ **E, NE England:** Bright and sunny spells with scattered wintry showers. Wind northeast moderate to fresh, turning northerly and decreasing light. Cold. Max 1C to 3C (34F to 37F).

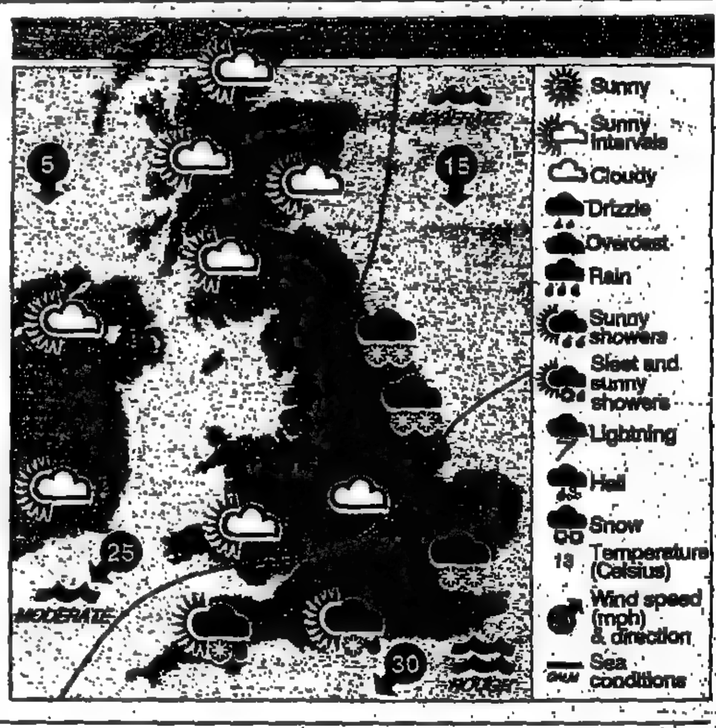
☐ **N Wales, NW, Cent N England:** Mainly cloudy with isolated snow flurries at first. Dry and brighter later. Wind northeast moderate to fresh, decreasing later. Cold. Max 2C to 4C (36F to 39F).

☐ **Lakes, IoM, SW, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll, N Ireland:** Mostly dry with bright or sunny spells. Wind north to northeast light to moderate, decreasing later. Max 3C to 5C (37F to 41F).

☐ **Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney:** Dry and bright at first, becoming more cloudy with sleet or snow later. Wind light to moderate north becoming northwesterly. Max 2C to 4C (36F to 39F).

☐ **Shetland:** Dry at first. Cloud thickening with rain or sleet later. Wind north to northwest moderate. Max 4C (39F).

☐ **Outlook:** Most places dry and bright, more cloudy in east with occasional sleet. Cold.



AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm. b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gale; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; sn=snow; s=sun; t=thunder

	Sun hrs	Rain in	C	Max F	
Aberdeen	3.2	0.14	3	37	h
Anglesey	2.1	0.01	2	36	b
Aspatria	0.1	0.01	1	34	sn
Aviemore	4.0	0.01	-1	30	s
Belfast	0.2	0.02	3	37	sn
Birmingham	0.1	0.01	-1	30	sn
Bognor R	-	-	-1	30	du
Bournem'th	-	-	0	32	c
Bristol	-	0.01	0	32	sn
Buxton	1.2	0.01	-2	28	b
Cardiff	3.8	0.01	0	32	s
Clacton	-	-	-2	28	c
Cleethorpes	X				
Colwyn Bay	0.5	0.01	1	34	c
Cromer	-	-	1	34	c
Dunbar	X				
Eastbourne	-	-	0	32	c
Edinburgh	-	0.11	4	39	c
Eskdalemuir	-	0.04	1	34	sn
Exmouth	2.0	-	-2	28	c
Falmouth	5.8	-	-1	30	s
Fishguard	4.7	-	0	32	s
Folkestone	-	-	-1	30	c
Glasgow	-	0.02	3	37	sl
Guernsey	-	0.01	3	37	c
Hastings	-	-	-1	30	c
Hayling I	-	-	-1	30	c
Herne Bay	X				
Hove	-	X	-1	30	du
Hunstanton	-	-	1	34	c
Ilfracombe	X				
Isle of Man	0.8	0.01	4	39	c
Jersey	-	0.01	2	36	c
Kinloss	1.5	0.01	3	37	sn
Leeds	1.5	0.01	1	34	sn
Lerwick	X				

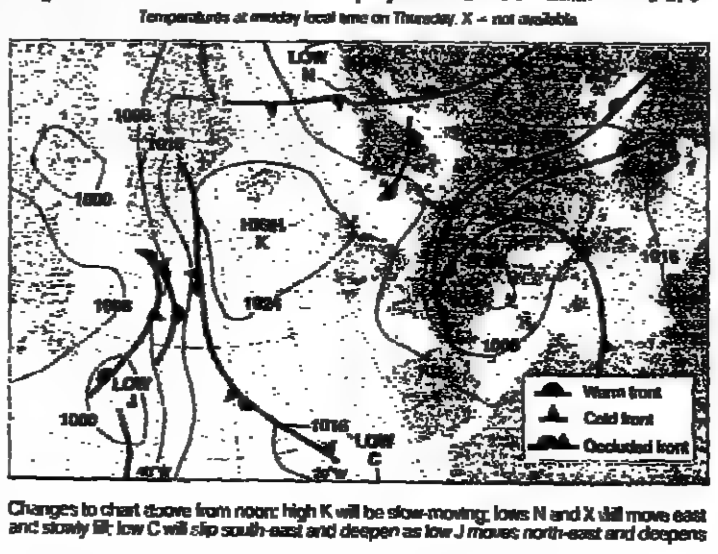
	Sun hrs	Rain in	C	Max F	
Leuchars	2.1	0.18	4	39	sn
Littlehmptn	-	-	-1	30	c
London	-	0.01	0	32	sn
Lowestoft	-	-	-1	30	c
Manchester	5.4	0.01	2	36	s
Margate	-	-	-1	30	du
Minehead	-	0.01	-1	30	c
Morecambe	1.7	0.01	2	36	c
Newcastle	0.7	0.17	3	37	sn
Newquay	6.3	-	0	32	s
Norwich	-	-	-1	30	c
Oxford	-	0.01	-1	30	sn
Penzance	X	-	2	36	s
Poole	-	-	0	32	c
Prestatyn	X				
Ross-o-wye	-	0.01	-1	30	sn
Ryde	X				
Salcombe	X				
Sandown	-	-	-1	30	du
Scarboro'	0.2	-	2	36	c
Shanklin	-	0.01	-1	30	c
Shrewsbury	-	0.01	0	32	c
Skegness	X				
Southend	X				
Southport	2.6	0.01	2	36	b
Southsea	-	-	0	32	du
Stornoway	5.0	0.01	5	41	s
Swanage	-	-	-1	30	c
Teignmouth	1.6	-	-2	28	c
Tenby	6.3	0.01	0	32	s
Tiree	0.1	-	4	39	c
Torquay	0.8	-	0	32	b
Tynemouth	-	0.04	4	39	c
Ventnor	-	-	-1	30	du
West-s-mare	2.6	-	-1	30	b
Weymouth	0.2	-	-1	30	c

ABROAD

	C	F			C	F	
Ajaccio	13	55	s	Corfu	X		
Akrotiri	19	66	s	C'phagn	-4	25	sn
Alex'dria	20	68	f	Dublin	0	32	c
Algiers	16	61	r	Dubrovnik	13	55	c
Amst'dm	-9	16	s	Faro	12	54	f
Athens	15	59	s	Florence	9	48	f
B Aires	30	86	s	Frankfurt	-9	16	sn
Bahrain	23	73	s	Funchal	X		
Bangkok	31	88	s	Geneva	0	32	c
Barbados	29	84	f	Gibraltar	13	55	c
Barcelona	9	48	f	Helsinki	-5	23	c
Beirut	18	64	s	Hong K	21	70	f
Belgrade	-3	27	f	Innsbrck	-6	21	c
Berlin	-12	10	s	Istanbul	12	54	f
Bermuda	19	66	d	Jeddah	27	81	s
Biarritz	3	37	s	Jo'burg	26	79	s
Bordx	-1	30	c	L Angels	X		
Brussels	-11	12	c	L Palmas	20	68	s
Budapst	-5	27	f	Le Toquet	-7	19	f
Cairo	21	70	f	Lisbon	8	46	r
Cape Tn	23	73	s	Locarno	1	34	sn
Ch'church	X			Luxembg	-8	18	s
Chicago	11	52	f	Luxor	24	75	s
Cologne	-9	16	c	Madrid	5	41	f

	C	F			C	F	
Majorca	15	59	f	Rome	12	54	r
Malaga	12	54	c	S Fr'isco	13	55	f
Malta	19	66	s	S Paulo	25	77	f
Melb'rne	18	64	s	Salzburg	-9	16	f
Mexico C	17	63	s	Santiago	30	86	s
Miami	27	81	s	Seoul	-6	21	s
Milan	1	34	sn	Sing'por	27	81	r
Montreal	-11	12	f	St'kholm	-7	19	s
Moscow	-12	10	s	Strasb'rg	-12	10	s
Munich	-9	16	s	Sydney	21	70	f
N Delhi	17	63	s	Tangier	10	50	f
N York	4	39	f	Tel Aviv	18	64	s
Nairobi	26	79	f	Tenerife	20	68	f
Naples	17	63	f	Tokyo	15	59	c
Nice	7	45	r	Toronto	1	34	c
Oslo	-7	19	s	Tunis	15	59	s
Paris	-6	21	c	Valencia	12	54	s
Peking	-2	38	s	Vanc'ver	8	46	f
Perth	40	104	s	Venice	4	39	r
Prague	-9	16	c	Vienna	-6	21	c
Reykjavik	4	39	c	Warsaw	-9	16	c
Rhodes	X			Wash'ton	X		
Rio de J	22	72	f	Wel'ngton	23	73	X
Riyadh	24	75	s	Zurich	-6	21	c

Temperatures at midday local time on Thursday. X = not available



Changes to chart above from noon: high K will be slow-moving; lows N and X will move east and slowly fill; low C will slip south-east and deepen as low J moves north-east and deepens

Bargain New Year Breaks in London

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY JANUARY 4 1997

ANDRÉ CAMARA

Ticket to ride: FirstBus, whose chairman is Trevor Smallwood, takes ownership of the Great Eastern rail franchise tomorrow, operating mainly commuter services into Liverpool Street station in the City. The first privatised service will be the 05.54 from Gidea Park in Essex.

Higher rates loom large on record rise in lending

By Sarah Cunningham

PERSONAL borrowing surged by a record £1.1 billion in November, the Bank of England said yesterday, providing further evidence that consumer spending is racing ahead and may soon have to be curbed by higher interest rates.

The government attempted to play down fears of a runaway consumer boom. Michael Jack, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said: "At a personal level, borrowing remains sensible and (people are) well within their ability to service the credit they want." The data showed growing confidence in the strength of the economy, he added.

The rise of £1.05 billion in net consumer credit in November compares to £875 million the month before and expectations of nearer £900 million. In the year to November, lending grew 16.6 per cent. The rise is the highest since this series of monthly figures began in 1993 and is also far stronger than comparable figures from the 1980s.

City economists interpreted the lending figures as further pressure on Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, to raise interest rates early this year. He will next meet Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, on January 15 to review monetary policy. The City is divided on whether or not rates will be raised at the meeting, but the consensus of opinion is that Mr Clarke will have to increase the cost of borrowing again before the general election.

Simon Briscoe, at Nikko Europe, said the figures would unsettle markets. "Consumer demand has been strengthening and a strong credit number points to higher rates."

Retail sales figures for November, released last month, showed high street spending up 0.7 per cent on the month. More recent evidence suggests that retail sales were strong at Christmas. The John Lewis Partnership said yesterday that its department store sales rose 5.1 per cent in the week to December 21 compared with a year earlier, and were up 8.8 per cent in the week to December 28.

The Bank of England also reported yesterday that net mortgage lending in November totalled £1.72 billion, compared with £1.846 billion the month before and £1.286 billion in November 1995. The slight fall was not seen as significant and economists remain convinced that the housing market is on a strong upwards trend.

Recovery on Wall Street in early trading enabled share prices on the London stock market to end the week on a firm note.

The FT-SE 100 index rose 32.1 points to close at 4,089.5, its best level of the day, reducing the fall on the week to just 1.5 points. The gain followed a strong rally overnight in New York, where the Dow Jones industrial average clawed back an early 95-point fall to close just 5 points lower on the session. In early trading yesterday, the Dow surged almost 90 points before settling back to a gain of 51.95, to 6,494.45, by midday as fears of an imminent rise in US interest rates began to fade.

Bond prices in London were steadier, with gains stretching to £¼ at the shorter end.

On the foreign exchange, the dollar rose from DM1.5511 to DM1.5582, while sterling advanced from DM2.6055 to DM2.6345. The pound was also up against the dollar, from $1.6907 to $1.6916.

Insurer warns of further fall in life bonuses

By Caroline Merrell

STANDARD LIFE, one of the UK's biggest life insurance companies, is warning that bonus rates on with-profits life insurance policies will fall for the fifth year in succession, despite last year's 11 per cent rise in the UK stock market.

Peter Robertson, Standard Life assistant general manager, said: "Many life insurance companies look at the level of dividend growth when considering their bonus rates, rather than overall growth, and dividends have not risen as much as the market. Payouts will not go up but could fall further."

The payouts for millions of savers with with-profits endowments have been falling since 1992. Thousands who took out these savings schemes at the end of the late Eighties to cover mortgages have been forced to increase their monthly contributions.

Next week, many of the biggest life insurance companies will unveil bonus rates for the coming year. Among the first to declare will be General Accident and Norwich Union. Philip Scott, NU group director, said: "Bonuses have been falling for a number of years. We expect this trend to continue . . ."

He claimed that payouts on ten-year policies would be hit most by bonus cuts — the returns on shorter-term policies have fallen from a peak of 13 per cent five years ago. Mr Scott said: "We expect ten-year policies to yield around 9 per cent, still much higher than inflation which has been around the 4-5 per cent mark."

Clerical Medical, now part of Halifax, has admitted it is planning to cut its annual bonus rate. However, it points out that the cut will be compensated by the extra bonus distributed by the Halifax in the takeover deal.

WEEKEND MONEY

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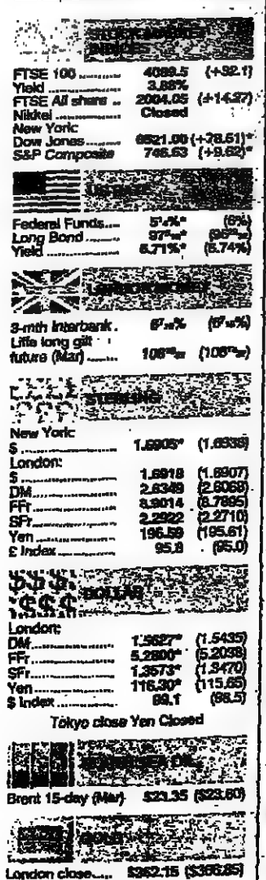
Business Today



Stock markets		
FTSE 100	4089.5	(+32.1)
Yield	3.88%	
FTSE All share	2004.05	(+14.37)
Nikkei	Closed	
New York:		
Dow Jones	6521.00	(+78.61)*
S&P Composite	746.53	(+9.62)*
US bonds		
Federal Funds	5¼%*	(5¾)
Long Bond	97[illegible]*	(96[illegible])
Yield	6.71%*	(6.74%)
UK bonds		
3-mth Interbank	6[illegible]%	(6[illegible]%)
Liffe long gilt future (Mar)	108[illegible]	(108[illegible])
Currencies		
New York:		
$	1.6905*	(1.6939)
London:		
$	1.6918	(1.6907)
DM	2.6349	(2.6069)
FFr	8.3014	(8.7895)
SFr	2.2922	(2.2710)
Yen	196.59	(195.61)
£ Index	95.8	(95.0)
Dollar		
London:		
DM	1.5627*	(1.5435)
FFr	5.2800*	(5.2038)
SFr	1.3573*	(1.3470)
Yen	116.30*	(115.65)
$ Index	99.1	(98.5)
Tokyo close Yen Closed		
Gold		
Brent 15-day (Mar)	$23.35	($23.60)
London close	$362.15	($366.85)

* denotes midday trading price

Low wages

Britain now has a cycle of low earnings and high unemployment. New research published yesterday also claims wage inequality is at its highest this century.

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Single aircraft maker for Europe on runway

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

THE formation of a single European aircraft manufacturer moved a step closer yesterday when partners in the Airbus Industrie consortium said they would sign a crucial agreement enabling independence for the venture.

The overdue memorandum of understanding will be signed over the next few days. It is believed to have been secured after a compromise over France's opposition to Airbus controlling production. Aerospatiale is thought to have settled its differences with Germany's Daimler-Benz Aerospace, British Aerospace and Spain's Casa in return for a phased transference of manufacturing facilities.

Agreement between the European partners comes just weeks after Boeing, Airbus's main rival in the large passenger aircraft market, announced plans to take over McDonnell Douglas.

Competition for orders between Boeing, of America, and Airbus is intense, putting pressure on Europe's aerospace industry to consolidate in order to cut costs. Political considerations have give the US aerospace industry a head start over Europe in the drive to consolidate.

Airbus is scheduled to be a single company by 1999 although speculation is growing that the timetable could be brought forward in response to the Boeing/McDonnell merger. However, Airbus and British Aerospace, which has a 20 per cent stake in the venture, have brushed aside such expectations.

Airbus, based in Toulouse, is officially a "grouping of economic interests", giving it legal status as a body that makes no profits or losses.

France, whose Aerospatiale is heavily involved in civil aircraft manufacture, had argued against Airbus having control of its members' aircraft factories while Germany and Britain had been strongly in favour. Spain has only a minority stake in Airbus and is therefore not pivotal to any restructuring of the business.

Airbus has refused to elaborate on the details of the agreement before the deal is signed.

Tempus, page 24

Woolwich sends out float details

By Marianne Curphey

MORE than 2.5 million members of the Woolwich will be told next week how many shares they will receive in the building society's flotation.

The Woolwich, which yesterday vowed to continue its fight to amend some proposals in the controversial Building Societies Bill, will publish its transfer document with details of windfall payments on Monday.

Qualifying members will be sent full details of the proposed share distribution scheme, an estimated share price range and key dates in the transfer document. The mailing will take about 11 days and all members eligible to vote on the £3 billion conversion proposals will be contacted.

Woolwich windfall, page 25

Granada faces contracts row

By Jason Nissé

Robinson: good deal

GRANADA GROUP is facing a possible revolt at its annual shareholders' meeting on January 29, over the service contracts that it gives to top executives.

The executive directors have 24-month notice periods, which would be extended to 36 months in the event of the company being taken over.

This means that Gerry Robinson, chief executive, could receive a pay-off of up to £2.1 million and the golden goodbyes for the board might be as high as £6.78 million.

Institutional investors have been pressurising companies to reduce the length of contracts to a year. This has been emphasised in submissions to the Hampel committee on corporate governance by the Association of British Insurers (ABI) and the National Association of Pension Funds.

Richard Regan, of the ABI, said: "Companies should be moving towards shorter service contracts and more importantly there should be provisions for mitigation and phasing of payments. I expect people will be writing to Granada to make this point."

In its annual report, Granada says that notice periods of more than a year are appropriate because of the business in which Granada operates. Granada wants to introduce a long-term incentive plan that could see directors receive a bonus of 100 per cent of their salary in shares.

The plan, to be voted on at the annual meeting, would replace the old share option schemes, under which Mr Robinson received options currently worth £4.87 million.

Under the new plan Mr Robinson's basic salary of £700,000 would be doubled if Granada's shares perform among the top 25 companies in the FT-SE 100 index and the company meets a series of other performance criteria.

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Liberty international

BA recruitment plan tallies with redundancies

By Jon Ashworth

BRITISH AIRWAYS has accelerated its £1 billion business efficiency programme with a bewildering round of employee musical chairs. The airline has confirmed that it is seeking 5,000 voluntary redundancies, but said that it intends to take on a similar number of new recruits skilled in customer services and languages.

BA initially hopes to take on 1,000 cabin crew and customer service staff in the next year. It says that more than 2,500 existing cabin crew "want to go part-time", and it needs recruits versed in languages to fill the gap. BA needs to increase numbers overall to cope with a busier airline schedule.

A newspaper and radio advertising campaign will begin shortly. BA conceded, however, that positions are being advertised internally for staff who are available for redeployment. A spokesman said: "There are a number of staff who will find their jobs no longer exist."

The process began last September when BA announced that it was closing its contract handling unit at Heathrow with the loss of 750 jobs. Two months later it put ground fleet services up for sale, threatening 470 jobs at Heathrow and Gatwick. Cabin crew on BA's regional routes face pay freezes and pay cuts.

The closures come on top of the 5,000 voluntary redundancies. Where the axe will fall next is unclear, but BA is intent on pressing ahead with its cost-cutting Step Change programme. The airline is seeking to upgrade its fleet of 737s to conform with new European noise regulations.

Bob Ayling, chief executive of BA, has angered staff with his reforms, and was quick to defend his latest initiative. He said: "We work in an increasingly competitive industry and must continue to be the first choice in every major market that we serve."

Mr Ayling added: "This change programme is not just a cost-cutting exercise but a positive story of investment, growth and continual efficiency improvement."

Inequality in wages at highest level this century

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

BRITAIN now has a cycle of "low pay and no pay" — low earnings and high unemployment, according to new research yesterday that showed wage inequality is now at its highest this century.

The Centre for Economic Performance, an independent think-tank based at the London School of Economics, used previously unavailable Government figures to demonstrate a range of key labour market and economic points, including:

☐ Low-paid people are more likely to become unemployed, while those getting jobs after being unemployed are likely to be low paid. Previously low-paid people getting back into work are even more likely than others to be low-paid again, "evidence of a cycle of low pay and no pay".

☐ In the 10 years to 1995, the proportion of employees earning below half median hourly pay has more than doubled — from 2.2 per cent of the total to 5.2 per cent. For male manual workers the increase in low pay is sharper still, quadrupling over the period.

☐ In jobs taken by the unemployed the real median wage level actually fell by 12 per cent so that at around £100 a week now, entry jobs — usually part-time and temporary, and often filled by women — are paid at about half the real wage levels of continuing jobs.

New entry jobs for unemployed people are also going to people from households where at least one other person is already working, rather than to people from the increasing number of jobless households, which now form a fifth of the total. An entry job is twice as likely to be taken by someone from a working rather than a workless household.

☐ Movement between lower and higher-paid jobs is limited, the studies show, and has declined since the 1970s. Even if people manage to move beyond low pay levels, they do not move very far, with only a third managing to move up more than two deciles — two 10 per cent bands across the spread of income.

The studies suggest that wage differences between individuals in the UK have risen sharply in the last two decades, resulting in a wage distribution that is now more unequal than at any other time this century.

The centre used Department of Social Security data to show that, of a sample of unemployed aged between 35 and 44 in 1978-79, as many as 78 per cent were unemployed 15 years later.

Paul Gregg, the centre's senior research fellow, said yesterday that the studies showed the need for a minimum wage, combined with reforms to the benefit system.

Traders handled an average 661,183 contracts a day last year, for a nominal average daily value of £159.5 billion

Busy Liffe makes 1996 vintage year

THE London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange (Liffe) enjoyed a record year in 1996. The exchange traded 167.94 million futures and options contracts, an increase of nearly 10 per cent over 1994, the previous busiest year, and an increase of 27 per cent over 1995. The annual average daily volume rose to 661,183 contracts, representing a nominal average daily value of £159.5 billion. During the traditionally quiet month of December a total of 11.3 million futures and options contracts were traded, up 45 per cent on 1995, making it the busiest December on record.

Preferred bidders named for BBC transmission deals

By Paul Durman

THE BBC has named an American-led consortium as the preferred bidder to take over the running of its domestic transmission network, which is expected to fetch more than £210 million.

The decision to award the transmission business to the group led by Castle Tower Corporation was a blow to NTL, the company that runs transmission for the ITV companies and Channel 4.

The BBC also named Merlin Communications International, a management and employee buyout team, as preferred bidder for the World Service transmission business. This transaction, which includes access to the Bush House control room and the BBC's satellite distribution system, will fetch a smaller price. Proceeds from the World Service transmission sale will go to the Government, but the BBC will receive the money from the Castle Tower consortium. It is to invest this in digital television.

Bob Phillis, the BBC's deputy director-general, said both preferred bidders would maintain the same terms and conditions of employment for the 570 BBC staff involved. However, he said this did not rule out the possibility of redundancies. He said viewers and listeners should see no change to their programmes.

The Castle Tower consortium includes TeleDiffusion de France, part of France Telecom, and the investment firm Candover Investments. NTL's bid met opposition because of monopoly concerns.

New bidder for Scott Pickford

THE BATTLE for the control of Scott Pickford took yet another turn yesterday when a second, unnamed company made an approach which could result in a £6.7 million bid for the geological consultancy (Fraser Nelson writes).

The move challenges the £6.06 million bid which Aerodata, an Australian geophysics company, is poised to make. It is understood that the new bidder intends to appeal to Pickford's rebel shareholders, led by Anthony Phillips, who last November won control of the Scott Pickford's board.

The new bid comes after Kapo Simonian, whose support gave the rebels the 52 per cent they needed, switched sides and sold a vital 3 per cent stake to Aerodata, removing the rebels' majority.

Don Scott, founder and chairman of Scott Pickford, said the new bid puts the company's future on a knife edge once again. He said the new bidder, believed to be a large American geophysics company, was "very respectable".

Tempus, page 24

Alfa Laval

Alfa Laval Ltd (report, December 9) makes process equipment for the brewery industry, but is not itself a brewer. Its new continuous, maturation system for lager beers speeds up secondary fermentation, and is not aimed at the real ale market.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.23	2.07
Austria Sch	19.32	17.82
Belgium Fr	56.60	52.30
Canada $	2.456	2.266
Cyprus CypE	0.819	0.764
Denmark Kr	10.53	9.73
Finland Mkk	8.38	7.73
France Fr	9.19	8.54
Germany Dm	2.76	2.56
Greece Dr	430	405
Hong Kong $	13.68	12.68
Iceland	120	100
Ireland Pt	1.06	0.98
Israel Shk	5.76	5.11
Italy Lira	2873	2518
Japan Yen	209.30	193.30
Malta	0.646	0.591
Netherlds Gld	3.073	2.843
New Zealand $	2.53	2.31
Norway Kr	11.34	10.54
Portugal Esc	273.00	254.50
S Africa Rd	8.51	7.71
Spain Pta	226.50	213.50
Sweden Kr	12.26	11.46
Switzerland Fr	2.40	2.22
Turkey Lira	192300	180300
USA $	1.786	1.656

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday

THE SUNDAY TIMES

The 1997 agenda for Walter Hasselkus, Rover's chief executive, includes launching the new small Land Rover, developing the replacement for the 600 and 800 saloons, finalising the new Mini, and sealing a deal on working practices. If he can pass those milestones, the renaissance of BMW's British subsidiary will be well under way.

Business Focus tomorrow in The Sunday Times

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

T&N still keen on Kolbenschmidt stake

T&N, the automotive components group, remains keen to take a stake of nearly 50 per cent in Kolbenschmidt, a German piston manufacturer, in spite of a newspaper report that the British company is ready to abandon its ambitions. But the deal has proved controversial in Germany and is facing opposition from the Federal Cartel Office, which will give its final ruling next month.

The company has still to renew one of two option agreements over 24.99 per cent of Kolbenschmidt's shares, prompting *Boersen Zeitung* to suggest the deal was unlikely to proceed. However, T&N is playing down the significance of the expired option, which covers shares held by Commerzbank, its German bankers. Last month T&N transferred half of its options from Commerzbank to Metallbank at a cost of £8 million. T&N has spent about £30 million to acquire and finance its interest in Kolbenschmidt. Taking ownership of the shares could cost another £120 million.

Albion shines on debut

WEST BROMWICH ALBION, the football club, almost trebled its value on joining the Alternative Investment Market yesterday. Its shares, placed at £100 each, closed at £280. The mark-up values the company at £16.9 million and creates an instant paper profit of £9.52 million for its shareholders, including hundreds of fans who bought shares in a private fundraising last year. Albion made a £171,000 pre-tax profit in the year to June 30, against a loss of £489,000 the previous year.

David Jones warning

DAVID JONES, the upmarket Australian retailer headed by former Burton director Chris Tideman, yesterday gave warning that half-year profits would be significantly lower than expected. The group, which owns more than 30 department stores, said interim net profits to January 1997 would be about 50 per cent lower at about A$19 million (£9.5 million). The warning is the fourth since Jones floated in November 1995.

German output rises

GERMAN industrial production rose by 1.6 per cent in November, official provisional adjusted figures show. An estimated decline of output in September has been more than halved, from 1.8 per cent to 0.7 per cent. In the west, output in November rose 2 per cent on October's figure (revised decline of 0.6 per cent). In the east, output fell 0.3 per cent in November (revised decline of 1.4 per cent in October). In October and November output was 1 per cent up on the same period in 1995.

Rotork disposals

ROTORK, the specialist engineering group, has sold its loss-making gas and refinery operations that comprise the company's Rotork Analysis division for a total of £1.39 million. The gas business was acquired by Signal Instrument Company for £640,000 while the oil refinery business has been sold to Sysco Analytics for £750,000. Pierre Pavy, a director of Rotork since 1984 and managing director of Rotork Analysis since 1990, is leaving the group.

Weston Hyde buyout

A MANAGEMENT team has acquired Weston Hyde Products, a manufacturer of flexible pvc film products, from EVC Group for £4.5 million. The business, based at Frome, Somerset, has annual turnover of around £17 million and employs 190 people. The three-strong management team was led by Stephen Cliffe, formerly a senior executive of European Vinyls Corporation, and was financed primarily by Barclays Acquisition Finance.

Bemrose buys Gerber

BEMROSE Corporation, the UK security printer and supplier of promotional products, has acquired Gerber Industries for $6 million. Gerber, based in Arizona, manufactures plastic products, primarily water bottles, to distributors in the promotional products sector. It also sells visors and yo-yos. Gerber is expected to earn operating profits of $800,000 on turnover of $7 million in the year to the end of February.

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

هكذا من الأصل

A WORKING WEEK FOR: GEOFFREY GELARDI

Hotelier profits from fine mix of fun and flair

Jon Ashworth enjoys a night to remember at the Lanesborough hotel as its managing director stages a fifth birthday extravaganza

ALAN WELLER

Geoffrey Gelardi, managing director of the Lanesborough, where attention to detail means creating computer profiles of a guest's likes and dislikes

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

New Year's Eve at the Lanesborough was not the occasion for that romantic candlelit dinner. As midnight struck, cannons began blasting confetti over revellers gathered in the Conservatory restaurant. Fireworks rained down on the glass ceiling, and the strains of marching pipers began wailing through the corridors. In the Library Bar, exuberant guests were eyeing bottles of 200-year-old cognac — a snip at £500 per glass.

It is five years since the Lanesborough rose from the shell of the St George's Hospital on Hyde Park Corner. Geoffrey Gelardi, the hotel's managing director, was intent on making the anniversary an occasion to remember — down to a five-foot birthday cake costing £4,000. Guests at the new year festivities were treated to a six-course dinner, washed down with gallons of Bollinger. At £285 per head it was reputedly the most expensive party in London.

The Lanesborough is nothing if not expensive. One grasps this at once, sweeping in past the spluttering gasfire so maligned by Michael Winner, the director of *Death Wish* and a newspaper columnist. Giant waxlike ornaments straddle the entrance. To the right sits the Conservatory, where the hapless Winner ordered a £499 bottle of Chateau Lafite-Rothschild 1961 with his kedgeree, and described the result as "so awful as to be almost indescribable". To the left sits the Withdrawing Room, where the world's richest man, Bill Gates, has been sighted in his trademark sweater and sneakers.

Below, in a tiny office lined with celebrity photographs, Gelardi, 43, is holding court. He sits at an elegant desk, close to a computer terminal brimming with guest profiles. "We find out all their likes and dislikes, what kind of music, which car to meet them at the airport. It all goes into their guest history."

The Lanesborough is owned by an Abu Dhabi consortium and managed by Rosewood Hotels, based in Dallas. Gelardi, whose past assignments include the Hotel Bel-Air in Los Angeles, arrived in London in 1990 to oversee the £85 million project. The work paid off. Occupancy at the five-star Lanesborough averages 91 per cent, in spite of rates that work out at about £320 a night. The hotel has successfully lured business from arch-competitors such as the Dorchester and Claridge's. "We thought it would take ten years to get where we have," says Gelardi. "We did it in three."

Gelardi is responsible for Rosewood's interests in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, but running the Lanesborough is a full-time job in itself. He has encountered all manner of requests, from demands for a helicopter at 20 minutes' notice, to bookings for private jets — the Gulfstream GIV is the executive jet of choice. Lanesborough guests are used to getting what they want.

"Anything you can think of has been requested," says Gelardi. "There really isn't anything that one would consider outrageous — other than the illegal stuff, which I wouldn't tell you about anyway. You always get the occasional crazy."

A tabloid newspaper once gleefully reported that the Lanesborough was being used as a "knocking shop" by local ladies of the night. Gelardi says the hotel was set up — the reporter tried to entrap his staff — but concedes that it is hard to control what happens behind closed doors. "We'd stop anybody from doing anything that affects our other guests, but we are not policemen. We are not here to judge what our guests should or shouldn't do."

Gelardi has consciously set out to avoid the "stuffiness" of some London hotels. "We've got people who take our Royal Suite for £3,500 a night, and some of them might not own a suit, especially the ones in the entertainment business. We've got some top people, directors of companies, film people, and they want the service, but they want to be casual."

> ❝ A hotel is like running a small city. That's why it's so terrific ❞

Stanley Kubrick, the film director, recently took over the entire second floor of the hotel, including the Royal Suite, for a week's shooting on his new film, *Eyes Wide Shut*, starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. He paid the full rate. Michael Jackson and Madonna have both sampled the Royal Suite, and not without drama. Two years ago some newlyweds arrived to find their honeymoon suite occupied by one of Madonna's entourage. They were hustled off to the nearby Halkin.

These and other disasters feature at the daily meeting of senior staff, held in Gelardi's office at 8.30am. The logistics are simpler than in many hotels — there are only 30 to 40 arrivals a day on average — but with nearly 300 staff serving 95 rooms, matters can spiral out of hand rapidly.

Gelardi's week is anything but dull. "The hotel business is like running a small city. You have pipes bursting, employees causing problems, running out of things, and that's half the fun. That's why this business is terrific — because you never have two days the same. You always have to be a little bit on your toes and ready for the next thing that's going to walk through your door."

One of the biggest dilemmas facing hoteliers is what to do if a guest dies on the premises. Hotel lore has it that victims are smuggled out in body bags in the middle of the night. Gelardi says that no one has succumbed at the Lanesborough yet. "I had two die on me at the Bel-Air," he recalls. "You are as discreet as possible. You don't take them through the lobby and say, yeah, there he goes — another guy who had breakfast this morning."

Michael Winner is the one person who is distinctly not welcome at the Lanesborough, but even that episode had its amusing side. Gelardi was invited to review Winner's most recent film, *Dirty Weekend*, and responded in kind, describing it as "so awful as to be almost indescribable".

Gelardi is married to an American, and spent years across the Atlantic, but he was born and raised in England. He worked as a waiter at the Carlton Tower near by, in the days when the St George's Hospital was thriving. His father, Albert, set up the hotel arm of the Forte empire in the Sixties, and was put in charge of American operations after Forte merged with Trusthouse. The Gelardis and the Fortes share an impressive lineage.

By the time he was 26, Gelardi was running food and beverages at a casino complex in Atlantic City, New Jersey, overseeing a staff of 1,500 and revenues of £38 million. In 1982, he began his association with Rosewood Hotels, then a small company linked to the estate of Caroline Rose Hunt, daughter of a Texan oil tycoon. After the Bel-Air he left Rosewood to run a luxury hotel in Seattle, then was lured back to take on the Lanesborough. He lives in Esher, Surrey, with his wife, Eileen, and their three children, Piera, Georgina and the baby, Olivia.

Gelardi treats me to a guided tour, ushering me past the rear entrance where Madonna and other celebrities sneak in and out. Arnold Schwarzenegger has been spotted roaming the corridors. Robin Williams is a frequent visitor, and the Duke of Edinburgh pops in for tea. Guests are attended by butlers, who monitor their charges using a sophisticated electronic system. For each floor, they can tell who's in, who's out, and whether the maid is cleaning up. They can tell which lights are on, and raise or lower room temperatures on request.

Back on ground level, I am guided towards the Library Bar, with its tasteful imitation bookshelf. It is here that Jon Bon Jovi, the rock star, idles away the hours, knocking back cognacs in the company of Salvatore Calabrese, the legendary barman.

Calabrese's triumph is a collection of rare cognacs, dubbed "liquid history", which he sells by the glass at exorbitant prices. Bon vivants pay £500 a shot — even £1,000 in some cases — and are treated to the history of the day, Napoleon marching on Russia; George Washington addressing the nation. Calabrese sold £21,600 worth of cognac in one night alone, and takes in £6,000 to £9,000 a week in cognac sales.

One guest was so sold on drinking "liquid history" that he insisted the price be kept from him, retreating with his glass to a corner of the room. Calabrese found him there with tears streaming down his face. To this day he is not sure whether it was the experience or the bill.

By now I can barely restrain myself. Why, I could even swallow my reservations about the fake books, the chintzy ornaments. I will build the Lanesborough into a dream palace, a Taj Mahal, the most wonderful place on earth. Calabrese draws near with a conspiratorial air. "Would you like," he says, cradling an ancient bottle, "to see the price list?"

ASSETS

End of the line for BR's days of dabbling in art

Joanna Pitman tracks the investment strategy of the railway's pension fund

You may not have realised but another British Rail sell-off is almost upon us. This one is scheduled for January 30 and comes in the form of an auction at Sotheby's New York of the last remaining canvases from the British Rail Pension Fund's art collection, which includes Old Masters.

There are some jewels left, including a pair of exquisite Venetian scenes by Canaletto, a portrait painted in 1756 by François Hubert Drouais of the children of the Duc de Bouillon, and a 14th-century triptych by Niccolo di Pietro Gerini.

Sotheby's, which advised the pension fund on the original acquisitions and has handled the subsequent sales, has put an estimated value of between $1.5 million and $2 million on the Canaletto pair, and between $600,000 and $800,000 on the Drouais.

"An Old Master in good condition with no questions over attribution will generally sell very well at the moment," says Alexander Bell, senior director of Old Masters at Sotheby's.

Investing in art, however, is a precarious business and the British Rail Pension Fund acquisition programme, begun in 1974, provides a good case study of the business. The fund's managers have dabbled in some of the world's most exquisite pools of fine art, confining themselves to quality through the advice of highly reputable — but highly costly — dealers. They have won admiration in the arts world for lending the collection to galleries around the world, but they have spent heavily on insurance and maintenance. Unable to value the collection on a daily basis, as they do for their other assets, they are now selling.

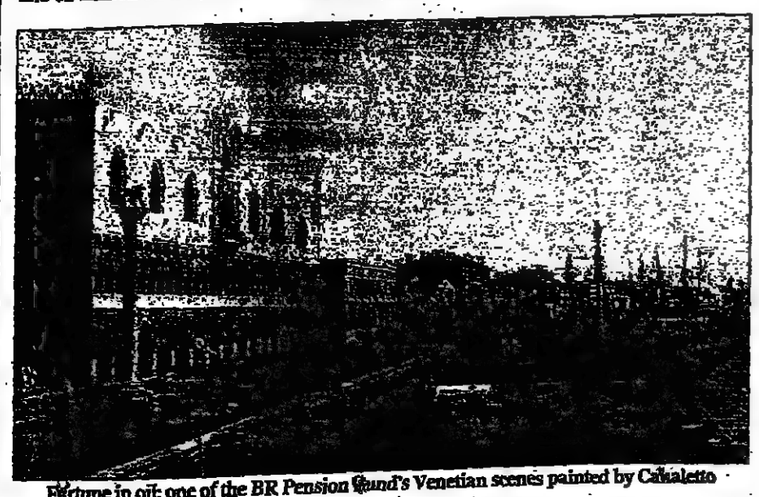
Was it a mistake? This first cautious tiptoe into the art world was necessarily an experiment and the sell-off has, on balance, made respectable returns. But in the end, art is an illiquid market and a range of index-linked government securities would probably have produced a better return.

The acquisitions programme lasted six years and spent £40 million, which, at its peak, accounted for 2.9 per cent of the fund's assets.

In 1987 the fund decided to realise the total value of the collection and began a programme of sales. There have been mixed results. Some collections sold extremely well, such as the Impressionists that went under the hammer in April 1989 for a total of £33.5 million compared with an original purchase price of £3.4 million. This gave a cash rate of return of 21.1 per cent and a real annual rate of return of 2.9 per cent.

More recent sales have been less remunerative. In July 1995 a group of Old Masters was sold for £5.25 million against a purchase price of £1.43 million, giving a return of 0.73 per cent per year over inflation. A further group of 18 Old Masters were sold in July last year. They went for a hammer price of £5.2 million compared with a purchase price of £1.7 million, bringing a loss in real terms of 0.4 per cent per annum.

Only 160 items of fine art remain in the collection, worth £6.5 million at purchase price. After this sale, a final collection of ancient glass and a few one-off pieces will be put on the market. The Renoirs, the Goyas, the cornucopia of Greek, Roman and Egyptian antiquities no doubt provided British Rail's Pension Fund managers with some singularly glamorous thrills, but I suspect they will be happier back on the more familiar black and white beat of solid paper securities.



Fortune in oil: one of the BR Pension Fund's Venetian scenes painted by Canaletto

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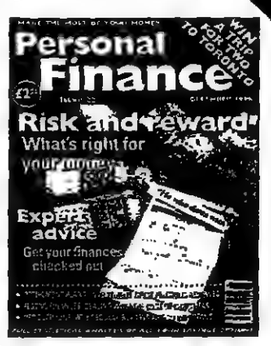

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STOCK MARKET MICHAEL CLARK

Bargain-hunters shop for shares in Hanson

BARGAIN-HUNTERS on both sides of the Atlantic turned their attention to **Hanson**, giving the demerging conglomerate's shares a much needed boost.

Overnight on Wall Street American investors were big buyers, snapping up the shares in the form of American Depository Receipts. A total of 4.5 million ADR's had changed hands by the close.

In London, more than 22 million shares had traded as the price rose 4¾p to 85¾p. Hanson was the worst performing constituent of the top 100 companies in London last year, with the price falling around 30 per cent, even after taking into account the demerger of both Millennium Chemicals and Imperial Tobacco. Next month the group completes its demerger programme when it hives off the energy side. This will leave just the building products arm and some other bits and pieces.

Elsewhere, trading descended into something of a farce as prices in London bounced back after the Dow Jones industrial average rallied strongly after another near 100-point fall overnight. With the Dow Jones climbing more than 80 points in early trading yesterday, the FT-SE 100 index finished at its best of the day with a rise of 32.1 points at 4,089.5 — a fall on the week of just 1.5 points.

Trading conditions remained desperately thin, with turnover reaching only 513 million shares. Brokers said a full return to work on Monday after the festivities may help.

Buying in a thin market helped **Rolls-Royce** to a rise of 8½p at 259p as it emerged that SBC Warburg, the broker, was tipping the shares for 1997, while **Zeneca** rallied 27½p to £16.48½ after recent weakness. Revived bid talk also lifted **Thorn** 20½p to 280p.

Elsewhere, a badly handled "buy" order resulted in a 25p gain to 456½p for **W H Smith**. **Next** firmed 7p to 566½p before next week's trading statement, with **Boots** up 15½p at 619½p, also due to give a rundown on Christmas trading.

Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, gave another helping hand to **National Westminster Bank**, up 11½p to 696½p. It has been saying for some time that the shares are the cheapest in the sector and should be bought ahead of the interim dividend reporting season which gets underway next month. Its target price for NatWest is 900p. Elsewhere in the sector, **Barclays** put on 14½p to 994½p, **HSBC**, 21p to £12.94, **Lloyds TSB**, 9p to 437p, **Royal Bank of Scotland**, 7½p to 551p, and **Abbey National**, 1½p to 746p.

Investors were busily switching out of **Siebe**, down 9½p at £10.79, and into **TI Group**, 15p stronger at 587½p, after comments about the former's ability to maintain its growth record. Siebe is reported to have fallen short of its 10 per cent organic sales target set for the first half. To add salt to the wound, ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, says that TI Group is cheaper and better value for money.

It was a sticky start to trading yesterday for those investors who bought shares in high-flying **Celtic** on the first day of trading in the new year. After Thursday's defeat at the hands of old rival Glasgow Rangers, shares in the Scottish Premier League side dropped a hefty £20 to £405. Because of their scarcity value, traders will only make a price in 100 Celtic shares.

It was also the start of dealings in the heavyweight shares of another football club. **West Bromwich Albion** was placed at £100 each by Albert E. Sharp, the broker, and opened at £250 before ending the session at £280, a premium of £180.

Lanica Trust, another of this year's high-flyers, ended 107½p higher at £19.82½, after briefly touching £20.25 for the first time. Not a bad performance for a company that started 1996 at 95p. Businessman Andrew Regan moved into Lanica earlier this year, raising hopes that he can put together the sort of deals he did for Hobson, which bought the Co-op Wholesale Society's food processing division. Talk in the Square Mile claims Littlewoods, the privately owned retailer and pools group, wants to reverse into Lanica. Littlewoods is currently talking to **Sears**, unchanged at 94p, about buying its Freemans mail order business.

News of a counterbid lifted Aim-listed **Scott Pickford** 6½p to 51p. The group says it is in talks with a third party which may be prepared to offer 53p a share. That compares with the 48p on the table from Aerodata Holdings which claims to have acceptances totalling 21.13 per cent of the issued share capital.

M L Laboratories is being seen by an increasing number of brokers as a recovery play. The group, which saw its shares tumble from a 469p peak last year after a profits warning, responded with a rise of 19p to 229½p.

There was also some long awaited support for **Wagon Industrial** as the price surged 27½p to 332½p on the back of a boardroom reshuffle. John Hudson, chief executive, has resigned after 10 years in the job with immediate affect. At the AGM in September, Mr Hudson spoke of a pick-up in the second half, but followed it two months later with another profits warning. At present, there is no successor. David Kendall has been appointed chairman.

☐ **GILT-EDGED:** The gilts market regained its composure after Thursday's sharp falls, with investors choosing to take their lead from a firmer trend among German bunds. Prices traded in narrow limits for much of the day with shorter dated issues outperforming the longer end of the market.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt rose £$^3/_{16}$ to £108$^9/_{32}$ as a total of 32,000 contracts were completed.

In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 was a couple of ticks easier at £101$^{23}/_{32}$, while in shorts, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was £⅛ better at £102⅝.

☐ **NEW YORK:** Wall Street shares surged and by midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 78.51 points at 6,521.00. The Dow was bolstered by a resurgent technology sector, led by IBM.

W H Smith saw its shares jump 25p on a buying order

SDX Business Systems, the data communications specialist, made a flying start to the new year closing 12p higher at a new high of 202½p. Yesterday it announced a link-up with Bay Networks to develop a new communications system. Kleinwort Benson has made SDX its smaller company of the year.

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

	Current price	Week's change	
Lanica Trust	£19.82½	+638½p	Speculative buying
Biocompatibles Intl	905p	+153½p	New-year tip
British Aerospace	£12.79½	+54p	Merger hopes
Celtic	£425	+£113	Demand in a thin market
Eyecare Products	13p	-2½p	Profits warning
Stanford Rook	465p	+82½p	New-year tip
Telspec	230p	+57½p	New-year recovery play
ML Laboratories	229½p	+31p	Recovery play for 1997
Scott Pickford	51p	+7p	News of counter bid

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	6521.00 (+78.51)
S&P Composite	746.63 (+9.62)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	Closed
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	13222.79 (+19.35)
Amsterdam:	
EOE Index	645.95 (+11.54)
Sydney:	
AO	2399.5 (-11.7)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	2859.28 (+10.51)
Singapore:	
Straits	2224.08 (+7.29)
Brussels:	
General	10518.67 (+85.09)
Paris:	
CAC-40	2282.76 (+25.79)
Zurich:	
SKA Gen	n/a
London:	
FT 30	2811.6 (+30.7)
FT 100	4089.5 (+32.1)
FTSE Mid 250	4493.6 (+24.2)
FTSE 350	2032.7 (+14.8)
FTSE Eurotrack 100	1895.74 (+1.94)
FT All-Share	2004.05 (+14.27)
FT Non Financials	2085.07 (+12.84)
FT Fixed Interest	116.07 (-0.66)
FT Govt Secs	93.63 (-0.23)
Bargains	29414
SEAQ Volume	519.6m
USM (Datastrm)	n/a
US$	1.6916 (+0.0009)
German Mark	2.6345 (+0.0290)
Exchange Index	95.8 (+0.8)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
£:ECU	1.3521
£:SDR	1.1825
RPI	153.9 Nov (2.7%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX	153.7 Nov (3.3%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

Advanced Power Cm	79½	+ 2
Aquarius	172½	...
BZW Endowment Red	53½	- ½
Cadcentre	268½	- ½
Colt Telecom (275)	294½	+ 2
Crown Leisure	80½	- ½
Dawn Til Dusk	121½	...
Epicore Network	55	...
Fountain Forestry	89½	...
Hardy Underwrtg	175	...
Henderson Tech C	347½	+ 3½
Highams Sys Svs	175	+ 43½
Kern River	99½	...
Linden	163½	...
Netcall	49½	...
Oliver Ashworth	135½	...
On-Line	97½	...
Oxford Biomedica	65½	...
Parkwood Holdings	77½	...
Pilat Technologies	59½	...
Provend (125)	136½	+ 1
SDX Business Sys	200½	+ 12
Sanctaury Music (65)	65½	...
Scot Highland Htls	142½	...
Sunderland	750	+ 2½
Sutton Harbour	130	+ 1½
Wst Brom Albion	£280	...
Xenova	210	...
Yeoman Group	157½	...

RIGHTS ISSUES

Biocompatibles n/p	377½	+ 12½
Fisher J n/p (120)	27½	...
RPC n/p (142)	4	...
Shaftesbury n/p	19½	...

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:	
Telspec	230p (+47½p)
ML Laboratories	229½p (+19p)
Thorn	280p (+20½p)
Kwik-Fit	233p (+15½p)
Capital Inds	228½p (+15p)
WH Smith	456½p (+25p)
Keller	196½p (+10p)
FALLS:	
Irish Cont	405p (-37½p)
BTG	424p (-8½p)
FS Cons	418p (-8p)
General Accident	731½p (-9p)

Closing Prices Page 33

TEMPUS

Learning to fly

THEY said it would never happen — but the four European partners of Airbus appear to have agreed on the future structure of the loose consortium as it endeavours to turn itself into a more tightly knit company.

Airbus partners rushed back from seasonal breaks yesterday to agree on a memorandum of understanding although in good old fashioned European style they did not announce what it contained. France's Aérospatiale, Germany's Daimler-Benz Aerospace, British Aerospace and Spain's CASA have nevertheless agreed terms by which Airbus will be born as a company in its own right. This clears the way for radical restructuring and creates the additional challenge of putting a value on the business. Hopes on this front, however, partly explain the recent rise in British Aerospace shares.

The major sticking point of whether Airbus should take control of manufacturing after 1999 rather than contract work out from its design centre appears to have been smoothed. The British and German wish for a deeper restructuring appears to have won against the French wish for minimal change. Doubtless the recent merger between Boeing and McDonnell Douglas in America helped the decision at the consortium which started as joint venture between Germany and France more than three decades ago.

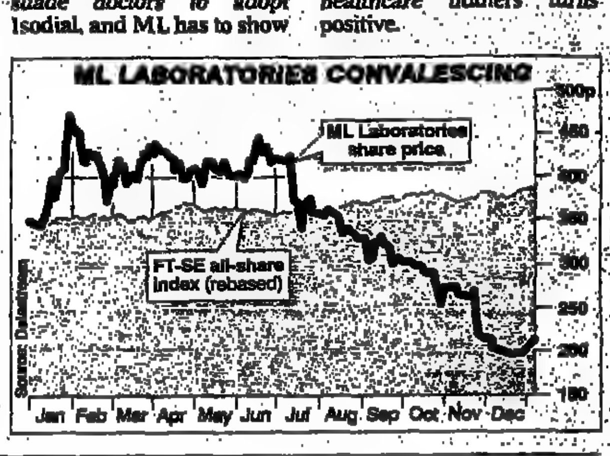
Aerospace has consolidated enormously in recent years but the pressure is on Europe more than ever to bridge political divides and form alliances that prove a match for the US giant. Airbus has fought Boeing in the large passenger aircraft market valiantly in recent years but the competition will get more fierce.

ML Labs

ML Laboratories, formerly the largest company on the USM, has begun the year brightly. Its shares closed at 229½p, a 19p rise yesterday following a 7p rise on Thursday. This still leaves the £330 million company at less than half its peak last January.

ML Labs is an emerging healthcare company that is actually making money. Its broker Panmure Gordon suggests profits are set to accelerate from £12 million this year to an astonishing £550 million by 2005. Yet for all the high hopes, the company had a miserable 1996.

Part of the blame lies with the biotech babes. Though not a biotech company itself, ML has been caught up in the market backwash against these development companies. Yet ML Labs has delivered two of its promised products — a kidney dialysis solution being sold by Baxter Healthcare and an asthma drug inhaler licensed to Medeva. ML Labs still has much to prove, and needs to make profits from actual sales rather than from licence payments as at present. Baxter has to persuade doctors to adopt Isodial, and ML has to show it can command a decent price for its inhaler. Much of Panmure's valuation relies on the success of an Aids drug, the current faith in which rests on a tiny trial. For all this, ML Labs deserves the benefit of doubt. Investors who like a gamble could win if sentiment on the healthcare tiddlers turns positive.



Danka

DANKA'S proposed $684 million purchase of Kodak's office equipment business was greeted with an 18 per cent rise in its share price in September. Since then the shares have slipped back to 525p. Is the market taking a more realistic view of the deal, completed this week, or does the setback represent a buying opportunity?

Danka has never been an easy company to follow, a fact reflected in the diverse views of the company held in the City. Existing investors are mainly American, and Panmure Gordon, Danka's broker, argues that the company is misunderstood.

Those who prefer not to buy the shares say they understand the company only too well. Concern centres on the poor image of the UK photocopier industry and the management's predilection for acquisitions. But it is the nature of the office equipment market and the intricacies of lease accounting that hold conservative investors at bay.

The Kodak deal raised the usual dilemma. Yes, the price was undemanding and, yes, the substantial increase in turnover transforms Danka's share of key markets. But it is also true the business suffers low earnings, the acquisition leaves Danka with heavy borrowings (Panmure's estimate of gearing is 3,800) and management will be severely tested in its efforts to integrate such a business.

Long-term holders have been handsomely rewarded for their loyalty, with the shares rising from 78p over four years in spite of the recent blip, and are unlikely to head for the exit now. Other investors should also cast aside their reservations.

Scott Pickford

SCOTT Pickford is, essentially, a private company that has stumbled across a stock market listing. Its last EGM saw shareholders controlling 96 per cent fit into one small room. But they must now resolve the company's future.

It is traditionally a family company but the outsiders who came with its all-share acquisitions last month succeeded in gaining control of the board. The old board sought rescue from Aerodata but when the white knight found itself rescuing a minority faction it began to head home.

Now the defection of Gabriel Simonian has stripped the rebels of their majority, and a new bidder is on the way — albeit behind a mask — with a slightly bigger offer than Aerodata's 48p per share.

All three gather information about rocks: Aerodata does it from aircraft, while Scott Pickford does it from the ground. Any bid that places the company into new hands will be an improvement. Pickford's shares stand at 49p, below the new 53p-a-share offer.

COMMODITIES

LIFFE

COCOA

Mar	897-896	May	961-960
Mar	915-914	Jul	991-985
Jul	933-932	Sep	999-992
Sep	951-950	Dec	1020-1010
Dec	950-958		
Mar	971-970		Volume: 5045

ROBUSTA COFFEE ($)

Jan	1250-1245	Sep	1220-1217
Mar	1230-1227	Nov	1225-1222
May	1203-1202	Jan	1239-1231
Jul	1219-1215		Volume: 2671

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)

Reuters		Oct	306.0-03.5
Spot: 314.9		Dec	304.0-04.0
Mar	311.4-10.5	Mar	305.0-03.0
May	310.5-09.3	May	307.0-05.1
Aug	304.0-07.8		Volume: 1990

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

Average fatstock prices at representative markets on January 2

(p/kg lw)	Pig	Sheep	Cattle
GB	96.46	138.24	109.72
(+/-)	-4.72	-3.78	+1.99
Eng/Wales	96.46	138.52	109.93
(+/-)	unq	+0.80	-2.60
(%)		+67.0	unq
Scotland		136.34	110.94
(+/-)		-2.61	-2.99
(%)		-60.0	-36.9

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	24.10	+0.55
Brent 15 day (Feb)	23.90	+0.55
Brent 15 day (Mar)	23.35	+0.40
W Texas Intermediate (Feb)	25.45	+0.30
W Texas Intermediate (Mar)	24.90	+0.30

PRODUCTS ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

	Bid	Offer
Premium Unld	220 (-2)	222 (-2)
Gasoil EEC	233 (-3)	234 (-3)
3.5 Fuel Oil	116 (n/c)	118 (n/c)
Naphtha	217 (n/c)	221 (n/c)

IPE FUTURES (GNI Ltd)

GAS OIL

Jan	237.75-28.00	Apr	202.50-03.00
Feb	222.75-23.00	May	195.00-95.25
Mar	212.50-12.75		Vol: 14231

BRENT (6.00pm)

Feb	23.57-22.59	May	unq
Mar	23.30-23.31	Jun	21.50 BID
Apr	22.72 BID		Vol: 23816

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

WHEAT (close £/t)		BARLEY (close £/t)	
Jan	94.50	Jan	93.00
Mar	96.75	Mar	94.75
May	98.40	May	96.25
Jul	100.15	Sep	92.75
Sep	93.25	Nov	94.75
	Volume: 70		Volume: 11

POTATO (£/t)

	Open	Close
Apr	66.5	67.0
May	unq	69.0
Jun		77.0
		Volume: 27

RUBBER (No 1 RSS Cif p/k)

Feb 79.00-79.50

BIFFEX (GNI Ltd $10/pt)

	High	Low	Close
Jan 97	1465	1459	1464
Feb 97	1422	1415	1424
Mar 97	1432	1430	1432
Apr 97	1475	1473	1473
Vol: 161 lots		Open interest: 3491	

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LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

(Official) (Volume prev day)	Cash	3mth	Rudolf Wolff Vol.
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	2302.0-2303.0	2192.0-2194.0	126400
Lead ($/tonne)	714.00-721.50	704.00-714.50	22672
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1042.0-1042.5	1062.0-1062.5	64212
Tin ($/tonne)	5770.0-5775.0	5815.0-5820.0	10440
Aluminium Hi Gde ($/tonne)	1524.0-1525.0	1554.0-1554.5	147475
Nickel ($/tonne)	6452.0-6453.0	6540.0-6550.0	42320

LIFFE OPTIONS

Series		Calls Jan	Apr	Jul	Puts Jan	Apr	Jul
Alld Dom	420	26	39½	45	1	7	14
(*444)	460	3	17	23½	17½	25	34
ASDA	120	5	9	11	1	4	7
(*124)	130	1	4½	7	6½	9½	12
Boots	600	21½	41	49	1½	12	22
(*619½)	650	1	13½	21½	31	34	48
Br Airways	550	49	63½	72½	0	9	19
(*598)	600	9	31	41	10½	25½	34½
BP	650	53	70	61½	1½	16	22
(*690)	700	4	24	36	21½	39	46
Br Steel	140	18	20½	24	1½	1½	5
(*157½)	160	2	10	12	4	4	14
C & W	460	12	30	39	5½	16	25
(*467)	500	11	13½	22	19½	34½	47
CU	650	59½	55	64	2½	26	35
(*682½)	700	5½	37½	41	27½	53½	61½
ICI	750	21½	40½	51	4	27	34
(*769½)	800	1½	16½	26½	34	59½	63
Land Sec	700	41	56	64	0	5	13½
(*739½)	750	4	22½	32	13	22½	29½
M & S	460	20	34½	43½	1	8	11½
(*486)	500	3	17	23	16	25½	30
Nat West	650	46	60	69	0½	17	24
(*696½)	700	9½	29	41	12	42	49
Sainsbury plc	390	12	26½	33½	4	13	22
(*397½)	420	1	13½	19	23	29	29
Sainsbury	370	30	39	43½	0	3½	9
(*393)	390	9½	19	24½	8	13	22
Shell	950	45	69	75	1	14	24
(*992)	1000	9½	33	49	15	42	52
Smkl Bch	750	43	66	81	3	21	29
(*748)	800	7½	37	54	19½	42	51
Stonehse	300	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	330	—	—	—	—	—	—
Trafalgar	50	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	60	0	—	—	0	—	—
Zeneca	1600	56	108	141	4½	50	60
(*1647½)	1700	10	57	91½	49	101	120

Series		Calls Jan	Apr	Jul	Puts Jan	Apr	Jul
BAT Ind	400	27	40	49	2	20	27½
(*417)	450	5	20	29	19½	41	50
Vodafone	240	7	16	23	4	9½	14½
(*244)	260	1½	7	14	17	20½	25½

Series		Calls Feb	May	Aug	Puts Feb	May	Aug
Grnd Met	420	39	44	51½	2	9	12
(*455)	460	8	20½	29	15	25	30
Ladbroke	220	14	19	23	3	8½	11
(*227½)	240	4	10	13½	13	19	21½
Utd Biscs?	200	15	19½	22½	3½	9	10
(*210)	220	4½	9½	13	13	19	21

Series		Calls Jan	Apr	Jul	Puts Jan	Apr	Jul
BAA	460	22½	36½	45	0½	8½	13½
(*481)	500	1½	15	23	19½	27	32
Thames Wtr	600	46	30½	40½	7½	21	39½
(*600)	650	0	11	19½	50	53½	71

Series		Calls Feb	May	Aug	Puts Feb	May	Aug
BTR	260	21	25½	30	2	8	11
(*276½)	280	8	14	19	10	17½	20
Br Aero	1250	90	42½	107½	22	44	52
(*1279½)	1300	71	57	87½	46	69	75½
Br Telcm	390	15½	25	33½	7	13	25½
(*398½)	420	4	12	19½	25½	30	44
Cadbury	500	41	46	52	7	11	12
(*524)	550	13½	20	29	13	25	30
Guinness	420	40	15	47½	1	7½	11
(*455)	460	12	30	26	17	24	29
GEC	360	26	36	40½	3	6	13½
(*380)	390	6	15	22½	15	16½	26
Hanson	80	9	—	—	2½	—	—
(*85¾)	90	2	—	—	12½	—	—
LASMO	220	15	21½	28	5½	9	10½
(*250)	240	6	12	19	16½	18½	21
Lucas Varity	220	11½	18	22½	6½	11	15½
(*222½)	240	3½	9½	14	19	22	25
Pilkington	140	19½	23½	26	0½	2½	4
(*157½)	160	6	11½	13½	6	9	12
Prudential	500	32	46	52	4½	13½	17½
(*542½)	550	11	22	32	17½	32	36½
Redland	350	27	34½	36	2	10½	14
(*351)	390	9	17	19	14	26	29
R-Royce	240	23	29	33	3	7½	10
(*259½)	260	10	17	22	10	15½	19
Tesco	330	27	32	30	2½	9½	13
(*352)	360	10	17	23	14	23	27
Williams	330	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	360	—	—	—	—	—	—

FTSE INDEX (*4090)

	3950	4000	4050	4100	4150	4200
Calls						
Jan	147	96½	55	24	8	2
Feb	174	135	98	66½	42	23
Mar	183	147	113	85½	60½	41½
Apr	199	166	134	106	81	60
Jun	—	209	—	150	—	101
Puts						
Jan	4½	12	22½	44½	80	129
Feb	24	35	50	69	97½	132
Mar	41	59	75	98	124	155
Apr	60½	77	94	116	141	170
Jun	—	104	—	147	—	195

Series		Calls Apr	Jul	Oct	Puts Apr	Jul	Oct
Abby Nat	700	62	73	79	15	27	33
(*746)	750	33	46	52	41	51	57
Amstrad	140	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	160	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barclays	950	68	80	91	22	31	41
(*994½)	1000	38½	53	65	47	55	65½
Natl Pwr	450	41	—	—	9	—	—
(*476)	500	16	25	27½	33	49	52

Series		Calls Jan	Apr	Jul	Puts Jan	Apr	Jul
Glaxo W	900	38½	63½	79½	2	27	36½
(*933½)	950	9	36	53	22	51	61
HSBC	1250	81	96	112	4½	45	62
(*1292½)	1300	16	58	86	22	76	97
Reuter	700	49	66½	81	1	14	22
(*747½)	750	11	35	52	13½	34	41
Royal & Sun	431	14	20	—	3	21	—
(*441½)	468	0½	—	—	29	—	—

Series		Calls Feb	May	Aug	Puts Feb	May	Aug
Blue Circ	360	18	26	30	6	16	20
(*369½)	390	5	12	17	23	34	37
Kingfisher	600	43½	55	62	5	19	24
(*632)	650	15	27	36	27	43½	49

Series		Calls Mar	Jun	Sep	Puts Mar	Jun	Sep
Br Gas	220	12	18	—	9½	15½	—
(*221)	240	5	9½	—	22	27	—
Dixons	500	32	56	72½	9½	14	21
(*541½)	550	21	37	44	26½	33	32
EMI Group	1400	57	98	114	49	61	—
(*1402½)	1450	36	70½	92	75½	96	104
Tarmac	90	11	13	15½	2	4½	4
(*98)	100	4	7½	11	6	9	9
Hillsdown	180	19½	22	23	2	5½	6
(*196)	200	6	10	11½	9	13½	16
Lonrho	120	9	12	14	9½	11	12
(*124)	130	4	7½	9½	11	12	14½
Sears	90	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Thorn EMI	1500	—	—	—	—	—	—
(unq)	1600	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tomkins	250	14½	22	26	8	11	17
(*267)	280	6½	12½	16½	19	22	29
Lloyds TSB	420	27	39½	42½	13½	20	24
(*437)	460	9	18	24½	37½	42	46
Scot Pwr	325	26	—	—	9½	—	—
(*340)	353	9	—	—	21	—	—
Unilever	1400	46	60½	79	25	39	57
(*1401½)	1450	24	37½	56½	57½	79	86

January 3 1997 Tot: 45494 Call: 28480 Put: 17014. FTSE Call: 9816 Put: 4073. *Underlying security price.

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
FTSE 100	Mar 97	4084.0	4101.0	4076.0	4090.0	6839
Previous open interest: 56954	Jun 97	4105.0	4105.0	4105.0	4112.0	290
FTSE 250	Mar 97	4555.0	4555.0	4555.0	4556.0	10
Previous open interest: 4920	Jun 97					0
Three Month Sterling	Mar 97	93.31	93.32	93.29	93.32	7791
Previous open interest: 794820	Jun 97	93.05	93.08	93.02	93.05	6140
	Sep 97	92.84	92.85	92.81	92.84	3842
Three Mth Euro Yen	Jun 97				99.34	0
	Sep 97	99.19	99.19	99.19	99.19	210
Three Mth Euro DM	Mar 97	96.86	96.89	96.87	96.87	19841
Previous open interest: 973892	Jun 97	96.83	96.84	96.81	96.82	9116
Long Gilt	Mar 97	108-20	108-23	108-10	108-19	28705
Previous open interest: 133139	Jun 97				107-29	0
Japanese Govmt Bond	Mar 97	121.83	121.99	121.78	123.95	184
	Jun 97				122.83	0
German Gov Bd Bund	Mar 97	99.57	99.80	99.34	99.70	108910
Previous open interest: 217992	Jun 97	98.71	98.80	98.60	98.80	47
Three month ECU	Mar 97	95.96	95.95	95.93	95.95	402
Previous open interest: 27475	Jun 97	95.94	95.94	95.92	95.94	85
Euro Swiss Franc	Mar 97	98.19	98.19	98.08	98.12	8706
Previous open interest: 86905	Jun 97	98.10	98.10	98.00	98.02	1889
Italian Govmt Bond	Mar 97	127.70	128.10	127.27	127.90	20157
Previous open interest: 60594	Jun 97	127.34	127.34	127.34	127.43	245

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 6 Finance Hse 6

Discount Market Loans: O/night high: 6¼ Low 5¾ Week fixed: 6

Treasury Bills (Dis): Buy: 2 mth 6¼; 3 mth 6¼; Sell: 2 mth 6; 3 mth: 6¼

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis)	6-5¾	6⅛-6⅛	6⅛-6⅛	6⅛-6⅛	
Sterling Money Rates	6⅛-6⅛	6$^5/_{16}$-6$^3/_{16}$	6$^{7}/_{16}$-6$^{5}/_{16}$	6⅝-6½	7-6$^{7}/_{8}$
Interbank	6⅛-6⅛	6$^5/_{16}$-6$^3/_{16}$	6$^{7}/_{16}$-6$^{5}/_{16}$	6⅝-6½	7-6$^{7}/_{8}$
Overnight: open 6, close 6¼					
Local Authority Deps	6¼	n/a	6¼	6½	6¾
Sterling CDs	6⅛-6⅛	6⅛-6⅛	6⅛-6⅛	6⅝-6⅝	6⅞-6⅞
Dollar CDs	5.36	n/a	5.40	5.51	5.72
Building Society CDs	6⅛-6⅛	6⅛-6⅛	6⅛-6⅛	6⅛-6⅛	6⅞-6⅞

TREASURY BILLS: Applcts £1,298m allotted £200m. Bids £98.46% received 76%. Last week £96.45% received: 48%. Avge rate: £6.1729% last wk £6.1647%. Next week: £200m

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	Call
Dollar	5⅛-5¼	5⅝-5½	5⅝-5½	5¾-5⅝	5-4
Deutschemark	3¼-3⅛	3¼-3⅛	3¼-3	3¼-3	3¼-2¾
French Franc	3⅝-3½	3⅝-3½	3½-3	3½-3	3¼-2¾
Swiss Franc	1¾-1½	1¾-1½	1¾-1½	1¾-1½	2-1
Yen	½-¼	⅝-½	⅝-½	⅝-½	1-par

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Bullion: Open $365.00-365.30 Close: $361.90-362.40 High: $365.00-365.30 Low: $361.00-361.50 AM: $364.30 PM: $364.00

Krugerrand: $361.00-364.00 (£213.50-215.50)

Platinum: $366.00 (£215.95) Silver: $4.69 (£2.765) Palladium: $119.75 (£70.65)

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mkt Rates for January 3	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Amsterdam	2.9432-2.9591	2.9567-2.9591	¾-⅝pr	2¼-2⅛pr
Brussels	54.020-54.306	54.263-54.306	17-12pr	49-42pr
Copenhagen	10.021-10.072	10.065-10.072	2½-2⅛pr	7¼-6½pr
Dublin	1.0088-1.0132	1.0120-1.0132	5-1pr	19-13pr
Frankfurt	2.6218-2.6358	2.6340-2.6358	¾-⅝pr	2¼-2pr
Lisbon	263.51-265.00	264.67-265.00	¼-⅛ds	¼-½ds
Madrid	220.81-222.00	221.76-222.00	1-9ds	1-17ds
Milan	2579.8-2593.6	2591.7-2593.6	23-37ds	39-60ds
Montreal	2.3260-2.3355	2.3265-2.3262	0.63-0.57pr	1.20-1.12pr
New York	1.6902-1.6978	1.6915-1.6921	0.115-0.095pr	0.383-0.352pr
Oslo	10.855-10.900	10.892-10.900	¼-⅛pr	¼-⅛pr
Paris	8.8460-8.9047	8.9001-8.9047	2¼-2⅛pr	6¼-6⅛pr
Stockholm	11.662-11.717	11.687-11.708	¼-⅛pr	¼-⅛pr
Tokyo	196.14-196.71	196.47-196.71	1-¾pr	2¾-2½pr
Vienna	18.437-18.545	18.531-18.545	¾-⅝pr	1¾-1½pr
Zurich	2.2835-2.2947	2.2911-2.2933	¾-⅝pr	2¼-2⅛pr

Source: Extel. Premium - pr. Discount - ds.

DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.2619-1.2635
Austria	10.94-10.95
Belgium (Com)	32.04-32.09
Canada	1.3777-1.3782
Denmark	5.9450-5.9500
France	5.2605-5.2625
Germany	1.5561-1.5568
Hong Kong	7.7345-7.7350
Ireland	1.6710-1.6730
Italy	1531.3-1532.8
Japan	116.15-116.25
Malaysia	2.5215-2.5225
Netherlands	1.7465-1.7475
Norway	6.4400-6.4420
Portugal	156.39-156.48
Singapore	1.4025-1.4035
Spain	131.13-131.16
Sweden	6.9103-6.9178
Switzerland	1.3536-1.3546

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso*	1.6905-1.6932
Australia dollar	2.1342-2.1362
Bahrain dinar	0.632-0.644
Brazil real*	1.7650-1.7695
China yuan	13.874-14.174
Cyprus pound	0.7905-0.8005
Finland markka	7.775-7.891
Greece drachma	411.0-418.0
Hong Kong dollar	13.0752-13.0799
India rupee	60.29-61.25
Indonesia rupiah	3964.0-4032.6
Kuwait dinar KD	0.5025-0.5125
Malaysia ringgit	4.2626-4.2650
New Zealand dollar	2.3886-2.3924
Pakistan rupee	67.35 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	6.100-6.224
Singapore dollar	2.3702-2.3733
S Africa rand (com)	7.911-8.013
U A E dirham	6.1525-6.2765

Barclays Bank GTS * Lloyds Bank

FTSE VOLUMES

3i	637	Lloyds TSB	5,300
ASDA Gp	4,900	LucasVarity	1,700
Abbey Ntl	3,400	Marks Spr	2,200
Allied Dom	473	Mercury Asset	516
Argos	395	NatWst Bk	2,700
AB Foods	290	Nat Grid	2,200
BAA	403	Nat Power	759
BAT Inds	3,300	Next	1,200
BOC	281	Orange	2,700
BP	4,600	P & O	2,000
BSkyB	2,900	Pearson	555
BTR	5,800	PowerGen	1,300
BT	10,300	Prudential	2,700
Bk of Scot	1,600	RMC	360
Barclays	906	RTZ	506
Bass	583	Railtrack	3,500
Blue Circle	2,000	Rank Group	1,300
Boots	2,500	Reckitt Col	354
BAe	1,900	Redland	1,700
BA	490	Reed Intl	609
Brit Gas	2,400	Rentokil	3,500
Brit Steel	5,400	Reuters	1,200
Burmah Cstl	917	Rolls Royce	3,000
Burton	378	Royal & Sun	1,100
Cable Wire	4,200	Royal Bk Scot	976
Cadbury	2,500	Safeway	624
Carlton Cms	401	Sainsbury	4,200
Cm Union	1,300	Schroders	175
Dixons	1,300	Scot & New	1,200
EMI	860	Scot Power	307
Enterpr Oil	2,900	Svrn Trent	409
GKN	1,400	Shell Trans	2,100
GRE	1,700	Siebe	1,900
GUS	618	SmKl Bch	580
Gen Acc	1,800	Smith Nph	903
Gen Elec	2,000	Smiths Inds	458
Glaxo Well	2,600	Std Chartd	2,100
Granada	1,400	TI Gp	707
Grand Met	8,400	Tate & Lyle	200
Guinness	1,500	Tesco	928
HSBC	1,000	Thames W	785
Hanson	22,100	Tomkins	2,200
Hays	459	Unilever	1,200
ICI	549	Utd Utilities	561
Imp Tob	1,800	Utd News	364
Kingfisher	2,400	Vodafone	5,100
LASMO	2,500	Whitbread	824
Ladbroke	3,800	Wllms Hld	571
Land Secs	301	Wolseley	186
Legal & Gn	604	Zeneca	1,700

WALL STREET

	Jan 3 midday	Jan 2 close
AMP Inc	38¾	37¾
AMR Corp	86¾	86⅛
ASA	34⅛	34⅞
AT & T	41¾	41¾
Abbott Labs	51	50⅞
Advanced Micro	27⅛	27⅛
Aetna Life	80	78
Ahmanson (HF)	32⅝	32
Air Prod & Chem	69	68¼
AirTouch Comm	24⅛	24⅞
Alberto-Culver B	48⅝	47⅞
Albertson's	36⅞	36
Alcan Alumnm	34⅛	34⅝
Alco Standard	41⅝	41⅜
Allied Signal	68⅝	67⅞
Alum Co of Am	66⅝	65⅛
Amax Gold Inc	6⅞	6⅛
Amerada Hess	58⅞	58¼
Amer Brands	49⅝	49⅝
Amer El Power	41	41⅛
Amer Express	54⅝	54⅝
Amer Genl Corp	40⅝	40
Amer Home Pr	58⅞	58⅝
Amer Intl	108¾	107⅝
Amer Stores	42⅛	40⅞
Amer Standard	38⅝	38⅜
Ameritech	60⅞	60⅝
Amoco	81⅛	81
Anheuser-Busch	41⅝	40⅛
Apple Computer	21⅛	21
Archer Daniels	22	22
Armco	4⅜	4⅜
Armstrong Wrld	68	68⅝
Asarco	25⅛	25⅛
Atl Richfield	131⅝	131⅝
Auto Data Pro	43⅛	42⅞
Avery Dennison	35⅞	34⅞
Avon Products	57	56⅞
Baker Hughes	34⅞	34⅞
Baltim Gas & El	26⅝	26⅞
Banc One	43⅞	42⅞
BankAmerica	98⅞	97⅞
Bank of NY	34	33⅞
Bankers Tr NY	85⅞	84⅞
Barnett Banks	40⅝	41
Bausch & Lomb	35⅞	35⅝
Baxter Intl	41⅝	40⅞
Becton Dickinson	44⅝	43⅞
Bell Atlantic	66⅞	67
Bell Industries	21⅞	20⅞
BellSouth	41⅛	41⅝
Black & Decker	30⅞	30⅞
Block (H&R)	29⅛	28⅞
Boeing	104⅛	103⅞
Boise Cascade	32⅛	32⅞
Bristol Myrs Sq	109⅛	107⅞
Browning Ferris	26⅛	26⅛
Brunswick	24⅝	23⅞
Burlington Nthn	87⅛	86⅞
CMS Energy Corp	33⅞	33⅞
CNA Financial	105	104⅞
CPC Intl	77⅛	76⅞
CSX	42⅞	42
Campbell Soup	80	79⅞
Can Pacific	26⅛	25⅞
Carolina Pwr	36⅞	36⅞
Caterpillar	75	73
Central & SW	26⅛	25⅞
Champion Intl	44⅝	44
Chase Manhat	88	88⅝
Chevron Corp	66⅛	65⅝
Chrysler	34⅛	34⅞
Chubb Corp	55⅞	54
Cigna Corp	137⅞	137⅞
Citicorp	103⅞	102⅞
Clorox	99⅞	99⅞
Coastal Corp	48⅞	48⅞
Coca Cola	53⅞	51⅞
Coca Cola Ent	47⅛	47⅞
Colgate-Palmolive	91⅞	91
Columbia Gas	63⅞	63⅞
ColumbiaHCA	40⅞	40⅞
Compaq Comp	74	72⅞
Comp Ass Intl	47⅛	46
Conagra	49⅞	49⅞
Conrail	99⅞	98
Cons Edison	30	29⅞
Cons Nat Gas	55⅛	54⅞
Cooper Inds	41⅞	41⅞
Corestates	51⅞	50⅞
Corning Inc	44⅞	44⅞
Crown Cork	53⅞	53⅞
Dana Corp	33	32⅞
Dayton Hudson	38⅞	38⅞
Deere	40⅞	40⅞
Delta Air Lines	70⅞	69⅞
Deluxe Corp	32⅞	31⅞
Digital Equip	36⅞	35⅞
Dillard Dept St	30⅞	30⅞
Disney (Walt)	68⅞	67⅞
Dominion Res	38	37⅞
Donelley (RR)	31	30⅞
Dover Corp	50⅞	49⅞
Dow Chemical	79⅞	78⅞
Dow Jones	34⅞	34⅞
Dresser	32	31⅞
Duke Power	46⅞	45⅞
Dun & Bradstreet	23⅞	23⅞
Du Pont	96⅞	95⅞
Eastman Chem	55⅞	54⅞

	Jan 3 midday	Jan 2 close
Eastman Kodak	79⅞	78⅞
Eaton Corp	68⅞	68
Edison Intl	19⅞	19⅞
Elect Data Sys	43⅞	42
Emerson Elec	97⅞	95⅞
Engelhard Corp	19⅞	19⅞
Enron Corp	43⅞	42⅞
Entergy	28⅞	27⅞
Ethyl Corp	9⅞	9⅞
Exxon	99⅞	98⅞
FMC Corp	68⅞	68⅞
FPL Group	45⅞	45⅞
Federal Express	43⅞	43⅞
Fed Nat Mrge	38⅞	37⅞
First Bk Sys	69	68⅞
First Union Rly	11⅞	11⅞
Fleet Finl Grp	49⅞	49⅞
Fluor Corp	62⅞	61⅞
Ford Motor	32⅞	32
GTE Corp	45⅞	45⅞
Gannett	77⅞	72⅞
Gap Inc Del	30⅞	29⅞
Gencorp	18	17⅞
Gen Dynamics	70	69⅞
Gen Electric	99⅞	97⅞
Gen Mills	63⅞	62⅞
Gen Motors	57⅞	56⅞
Gen Reinsurance	155⅞	154⅞
Gen Signal	42⅞	42⅞
Genuine Parts	44⅞	44⅞
Georgia Pac	73	72⅞
Gillette	77⅞	78
Glaxo Wellc ADR	31⅞	31⅞
Goodrich (BF)	40⅞	39⅞
Goodyear Tire	51⅞	51
Grt Atl Pac Tea	31⅞	31⅞
Great Wstn Fin	29⅞	28⅞
Halliburton	60⅞	60
Harcourt General	46⅞	45⅞
Heinz (HJ)	35⅞	35⅞
Hercules	42⅞	42⅞
Hershey Foods	44	43⅞
Hewlett Packard	51⅞	50⅞
Hilton Hotels	26⅞	25⅞
Home Depot	50	49⅞
Homestake Mng	13⅞	13⅞
Honeywell	66⅞	64⅞
Household Intl	90	89⅞
Houston Inds	22⅞	22⅞
Humana	19	18⅞
ITT Corp	43⅞	43⅞
Illinois Tool	79⅞	78⅞
Illinova	26⅞	26⅞
INCO	32⅞	31⅞
Ingersoll Rand	44	43⅞
Inland Steel	20⅞	20⅞
Intel Corp	134⅞	130⅞
IBM	156⅞	153⅞
Intl Flav & Fr	45⅞	45⅞
Intl Paper	40⅞	41⅞
James River Va	33⅞	33
Jhnsn & Jhnsn	50⅞	49⅞
Kellogg	65⅞	65⅞
Kerr-McGee	72⅞	72
Kimberly-Clark	94⅞	95⅞
Kmart	10⅞	10⅞
Knight-Ridder	38⅞	38
Lilly (Eli)	74⅞	72⅞
Limited Inc	18⅞	18⅞
Lincoln Nat	52⅞	51⅞
Litton	46⅞	46⅞
Liz Claiborne	39⅞	38⅞
Lockheed Martin	89⅞	89
Louisiana-Pac	21⅞	21⅞
MCI Comm	33⅞	33
Marriott Int	55	54⅞
Marsh & McLnn	105⅞	103⅞
Masco Corp	35⅞	35⅞
May Dept St	46⅞	46⅞
Maytag Corp	20	20⅞
McDonalds	45	45
McDonnell D	65⅞	64⅞
McGraw Hill	46⅞	45⅞
Mead Corp	59⅞	58⅞
Medtronic	69	67⅞
Mellon Bk	71⅞	69⅞
Merck Inc	80⅞	79⅞
Merrill Lynch	81⅞	79⅞
Microsoft	83⅞	81⅞
Minnesota Mine	84⅞	86
Mobil Corp	123⅞	122⅞
Monsanto	39⅞	39
Morgan (JP)	97⅞	96⅞
Motorola Inc	61⅞	59⅞
Natl Semi	24⅞	23⅞
Natl Service Ind	37⅞	37⅞
Navistar Int	9⅞	9⅞
NY Times A	37⅞	37⅞
Newmont Mng	42⅞	42⅞
Niag Mohawk	6⅞	6⅞
Nike B	61	59⅞
NL Industries	11⅞	10⅞
Noram Energy	15⅞	15⅞
Nordstrom	36⅞	36
Norfolk Sthrn	88⅞	86
Nthn State Pwr	45⅞	45⅞
Northrop Corp	44	43⅞
Nynex Corp	49⅞	49⅞
Occidental Pet	23⅞	23⅞
Ohio Edison	22⅞	22⅞

	Jan 3 midday	Jan 2 close
Oracle	43⅞	42⅞
Oryx Energy Co	24⅞	24⅞
Overseas Ship	17	17
Owens Corning	42⅞	42⅞
PHH Corp	42⅞	42⅞
PPG Industries	56	55
PNC Bank	37⅞	38⅞
PP&L Res	23⅞	23
Paccar Inc	66⅞	69⅞
Pacificorp	20⅞	20⅞
Pac Enterprises	30⅞	30⅞
Pac Gas & Elec	21⅞	21⅞
Pac Telesis	37	36⅞
Pall Corp	25⅞	25⅞
Parker Hannifin	38⅞	38⅞
Pecn Energy	29⅞	28
Penney (JC)	48⅞	47⅞
Pennzoil	56⅞	56⅞
Pepsico	29⅞	29⅞
Pfizer	83⅞	81⅞
Pharm & Upjhn	39⅞	39⅞
Phelps Dodge	70⅞	69⅞
Philip Morris	113	114⅞
Phillips Pet	44⅞	43⅞
Pitney Bowes	56⅞	55⅞
Polaroid	43⅞	42⅞
PriceCostco	24⅞	24⅞
Procter & Gmbl	107⅞	108⅞
Providian	57⅞	57⅞
Pub Serv E & G	27⅞	27⅞
Quaker Oats	37⅞	37⅞
Ralston Purina	72⅞	72
Raychem Corp	80⅞	79⅞
Raytheon	48⅞	48
Reebok Intl	42	41
Reynolds Metals	59⅞	57⅞
Rockwell Intl	59⅞	59⅞
Rohm & Haas	81⅞	80⅞
Royal Dutch	172⅞	171⅞
Rubbermaid	22⅞	22⅞
SBC Comms	52⅞	52⅞
Safeco Corp	38⅞	38⅞
St Paul's Cos	58⅞	58⅞
Salomon Inc	47⅞	46⅞
Sara Lee Corp	37⅞	36⅞
Schering Plough	65⅞	65⅞
Schlumberger	101	99⅞
Seagram	40⅞	40⅞
Sears Roebuck	44⅞	45⅞
Shell Trans	101	100⅞
Sherwin Wllms	55⅞	55⅞
Skyline Corp	25⅞	25⅞
Snap-On-Tools	36	35⅞
Southern Co	22⅞	22⅞
Sprint Corp	39⅞	39⅞
Stanley Works	32⅞	29⅞
Sun Company	24⅞	24
Sun Microsys	27⅞	26⅞
Sunbeam	49⅞	48⅞
Supervalu	28⅞	28⅞
Sysco Corp	33⅞	32⅞
TRW Inc	49⅞	49
TOC Inds	1⅞	1⅞
Tandem Comp	13⅞	13⅞
Tandy Corp	43⅞	43⅞
Temple Inland	54	53⅞
Tenneco	44⅞	44⅞
Texaco	100⅞	99⅞
Texas Inst	65	63⅞
Texas Utilities	40⅞	40⅞
Textron	92⅞	94⅞
Time Warner	37⅞	38⅞
Times-Mirror A	51⅞	50⅞
Timken	45⅞	45⅞
Torchmark	50⅞	50⅞
Toys R Us	30⅞	30⅞
Transamerica	78⅞	77⅞
Travelers	45⅞	44⅞
Tribune	78⅞	77⅞
Tyco Intl	52⅞	52⅞
UST Inc	32⅞	32⅞
UAL	60⅞	59⅞
US Inds	33⅞	34⅞
US West Comm	32⅞	32⅞
USX Marathon	24⅞	24⅞
Unicom	27⅞	26⅞
Unilever NV	175⅞	173⅞
Union Camp	48⅞	48⅞
Union Carbide	41⅞	41
Union Pacific	59⅞	59⅞
Unisys Corp	7⅞	7⅞
USAir Group	23⅞	23⅞
USF&G Corp	21⅞	20⅞
US Life	33	32⅞
United Tech	67⅞	65⅞
Unocal Corp	42	40⅞
VF Corp	66⅞	66⅞
Wells Tech	33⅞	33
Wal-Mart Stores	23	22⅞
Warner-Lambert	74⅞	74⅞
Wells Fargo	274⅞	271
Westinghouse El	19⅞	20
Weyerhaeuser	47	47⅞
Whirlpool	48⅞	46⅞
Whitman	22⅞	22⅞
Winn Dixie	32⅞	31⅞
Woolworth	21⅞	21⅞
Wrigley (Wm) Jr	55⅞	55⅞
Xerox	52⅞	52⅞
Yellow Corp	14⅞	14⅞

هكذا من الأصل

CLONING AROUND 27
Don't end up paying for others' calls

WEEKEND MONEY

NUMBERS GAME 31
Our Economics Editor starts a new series

THE PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

ALAN ADLER

Gloves come off in trusts sector

Gavin Lumsden sees more bids this year as investors demand action over poor performance

While the best bargains in the January sales may have been snapped up already, there are still plenty on offer in the stock market. However, like high street reductions, some represent better value than others for the price.

Many City observers see a rash of hostile bids in 1997 as fund managers respond to growing investor unrest over poor share performance. This could unlock growth potential that has been dormant for decades. Investment trusts — which date back to the launch of the Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust in 1868 — are companies listed on the Stock Exchange which invest in the stocks and shares of other companies in the UK and abroad. Today there are 350 with more than £54 billion under management.

Over the long term, they have proved good vehicles for capital growth and on average have lower annual management charges than unit trusts. However, 1996 was an *annus horribilis* for investment trusts, as most new launches failed to hit their targets and shares in existing funds fell in value. Worst of all, there was the trauma of the Kleinwort European Privatisation Investment Trust (Kepit).

Launched in 1993 as one of the biggest trust offers ever, Kepit's misguided investment criteria meant its share price fell well below the initial offer price. After an acrimonious takeover bid from TR European Growth prompted offers to manage it from eight other fund managers, Kepit eventually converted to a unit trust and offered investors a cash exit. Investment trusts, with nearly half their assets overseas, have seen billions of pounds of their returns wiped out by sterling's rise.

Then last month zero dividend shareholders in the Exmoor Dual trust, a small split-capital trust managed by Exeter Fund Managers, discovered that the fund's articles of association stated a 12.2 per cent yield and not the 13 per cent they had been sold in the prospectus in 1988. This may have lost them £2 million.

The investment trust industry's basic problem is oversupply. Just 10 per cent of investment trusts own 50 per cent of the assets, leaving many unpopular and unviably small trusts.

Insufficient demand for investment trust shares has deflated their prices to an average 10.8 per cent discount to net asset value last year. The situation is not much better over three years. The average investment trust has grown 14.8 per cent in net asset value terms, but its share price has lagged behind with only 5.8 per cent growth. This frustrates shareholders because it denies them their investment's full underlying performance.

Analysts are predicting that discounts could widen by a further 5 per cent this year.

Charlie Ricketts, head of Gartmore investment trusts, believes this will prompt shareholders to press for action. He believes many investment companies will be only too willing to prey on weaker rivals in an attempt to boost assets under management.

This could even prompt the elderly F&C Investment Trust into action. It has come under fire this year for not mounting a bid so as to swell its £1.1 billion of assets in order to get back into the FT-SE 100. A return to the index would support a share price which has suffered both from speculation about Foreign & Colonial's future and the fund's misplaced faith in Japan and UK value stocks.

Jeremy Tigue, an F&C director, does not rule out a takeover. Particularly vulnerable trusts are those at a 15 per cent plus discount, especially investing in single countries, Europe and smaller companies. Though discounts disadvantage existing shareholders, they work in favour of new investors who can pick up a trust at a bargain. Both European and UK smaller company markets are tipped to do well next year.

Early investors who get into an unpopular trust in a sector that is about to recover could experience a "double whammy" as renewed growth attracts newcomers and eradicates the discount.

But Hamish Buchan, analyst at NatWest Securities, urges caution for prospective investment trust baggers. He says takeovers are extremely complex and hard to predict. But most importantly, he says: "Don't buy investment trusts for corporate action but on sound fundamentals." Rather than get it wrong, investors might be advised to wait until the corporate action has taken place and then take advantage of any pricing anomaly.

Invesco Enterprise demonstrates this. Its huge discount is a hangover from its days as the Lazard Smaller Companies investment trust, a poorly performing fund. Restructured, renamed and under the management of Andy Crossley, smaller company specialist, this fund is tipped to do well next year.

With an election looming, a general international trust is a good hedge against uncertainty in the UK market. Among those trusts trading at a discount that are currently being recommended by independent financial advisers are Bankers, with a discount of 9.1 per cent, Foreign & Colonial at 10.7, English & Scottish at 9.1, Electric & General at 10.2, Fleming Overseas at 17.4 and Scottish Eastern at 16 per cent.

In UK Income Growth, those being tipped include Murray Income at a 9.8 per cent discount and Investors Capital Units at 13.7 per cent.

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

Woolwich windfall on its way

More than 2.5 million Woolwich savers will be receiving details of their windfall payments over the next fortnight (Marianne Curphey writes). They will be told how many shares they will receive, but will not be told exactly what these shares will be worth because the price depends on market conditions on the day of flotation.

However, the Woolwich will give a likely price range based on current estimates.

The estimate for those qualifying for the basic distribution of shares is a payout worth between £500 and £1,000 per investor. The Woolwich also announced yesterday that it would be writing separately to members it believed were not eligible to vote. It will invite them to contact the society urgently if they believe they are eligible.

The building society adds that the special general meeting will be held at 2.30pm on February 11 at the London Arena, Docklands. This is the date by which people entitled to a variable distribution must top up their accounts. To qualify for the basic distribution, investors who had £100 in their accounts on December 31, 1996, will qualify for a basic payout if they also had £100 in their account at midnight on December 31, 1995.

Under the Woolwich's scheme, investors who have been with the society for more than two years and who have between £1,000 and £50,000 in their accounts will qualify for a larger payout, based on the lower of two balances between December 31, 1995, and the SGM in February.

Meanwhile, *The Times* continues to be contacted by Halifax investors who believe they are eligible for a windfall payment but who have been told otherwise by the society. As we reported on Thursday, computer errors mean some investors who could be eligible for payouts of an average £1,000 could lose out on their allocation. The Halifax has said there may be discrepancies in information sent to its 11 million customers.

Home comfort for Goldilocks

PERSONAL INVESTOR

GRAHAM SEARJEANT

The fear of investing in 1997 is the fear of a bear market. In reality, share indices in London and New York hit new highs over the holiday. The frequent sharp daily falls that punctuate this progress still jangle the nerves even if volatility is in part due to dealers trying to drum up business in a quiet period.

Short-term interest rates are widely forecast to rise in Britain and America. In an era of relatively low money rates, small changes have a geared impact on other financial assets. In reality, however, markets rarely break badly until rates have risen enough to tempt institutional investors from bonds, and later shares, into cash.

In America, the first rate rise of the cycle has yet to occur. In Britain, money policy should be tightened only modestly and temporarily, though who knows in election year. On the Continent, rates seem more likely to fall on normal economic tests, though the drive for currency union could interfere.

The biggest worry, perhaps, is that shares round the world have, on average, enjoyed such a long upward trend. Sooner or later, history suggests, this natural progress is bound to be interrupted by a bear market — a setback that is longer than the occasional short, sharp correction, and one during which prices fall 15 per cent or more.

The Morgan Stanley Capital International World Index of shares has been on an uptrend since October 1990. Sandy Nairn of Templeton, the emerging markets specialist, has reconstructed an equivalent index back to 1954, when the original Templeton Growth Fund was formed. He finds that the current global bull market is the second longest since then. If it continued through 1997, it would be longer than the great postwar uptrend of 1954-61.

That sounds ominous. According to Dr Nairn, however, investors should not worry too much about bears in Europe, North America and the Far East creeping in to eat up their gains. On a global average, the long 1990s bull market has been a relatively modest one, chalking up less than a third of the gains accumulated in 1982-87, before the infamous crash. Including dividends, gains so far are about 120 per cent or about 85 per cent after allowing for inflation. That is about four fifths the average for bull markets.

Not all markets have been pulling their weight. Soaraway Wall Street may exert the biggest influence but Japan, the second biggest, has been a drag, stuck in its own downtrend for virtually the whole period. London is average but suffered a local bear market in 1994. The FTSE 100 share index has risen about 40 per cent since that drop but is less than 20 per cent above the last bull market peak in January 1994. These are hardly heady heights.

In any case, on a global average, bear markets are not too fearsome for long-term investors. Since 1954, bull market uptrends have lasted an average 4¼ years and more than doubled your money in real terms. Bear market downtrends have lasted just under a year and lopped a quarter off prices.

Only perennial Cassandras expect the sort of crash that should persuade long-term investors to sell everything immediately. Even if there were a bear market, you would be more likely to lose out by missing the upturn. And as Dr Nairn points out, the 1987 crash presaged the shortest and mildest global bear market in the period, partly because Japanese investors ignored it.

New York is plainly ahead of the trend, and tension between currencies is growing. For lateral thinkers, that may make it a good year for emerging markets. Aside from some unhelpful preparations for the euro, most leading economies are in any case growing steadily without inflation. Deep imbalances that led to the 1973 oil crisis and the worst postwar bear market are nowhere in sight.

Setbacks are still worth avoiding. Those who have to sell this year or have money to invest should stage their sales or payments, not make them all at once.

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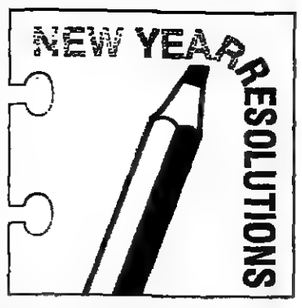
Act now to avoid misery later

Sara McConnell begins a new year series of financial recommendations



If you are starting the new year with no pension at all or one destined to be so small as to be almost unnoticeable, you risk the prospect of an impoverished retirement unless you act fast. You are not alone. Only half the working adult population belongs to a company scheme. Many of the remainder put little or nothing aside for retirement, depending on the State to support them when they become pensioners.

But this is a dangerous fallacy. The current maximum state pension is £61.15 a week for a single person and £97.75 a week for a couple. Whichever political party wins the general election this year will make clear that people who make no move to save cannot expect much help from the State. Both Labour and Tories are committed to devising new ways of persuading people to take out private pensions to top up a dwindling state pension. As things stand, however, the main alternative to a company pension is a personal pension.

So now is the time to review your pension plans. To delay starting a pension in the first place or to fail to increase your contributions at least in line with inflation will seriously damage your prospects of a prosperous retirement, according to William Mercer, the actuary.

Figures calculated for *The Times* by the firm show that for every ten years you delay putting money into your pension you will have to contribute roughly double what you would have done if you had started ten years earlier, to get the same income. The later you start the less time your cash will have to grow and shake off the impact of early initial charges.

The figures assume you earn £15,000 a year and want a pension of half this when you retire. If you have not started a pension by the age of 30, you will have to contribute 18 per cent of your annual salary, or £2,700, if you want to retire at 60. Delay until you are 40 and you will have to set aside a third of your salary or £4,950 a year, to receive your desired income at 60. By the time you are 50, the cost of starting a pension and retiring at 60 becomes prohibitively expensive and you would have to contribute nearly 80 per cent of salary.

In most cases, these amounts exceed the maximum you are allowed to put into a pension and get tax relief under Inland Revenue rules, says Tim Keogh, at William Mercer. At 30, you can put up to 17.5 per cent of your salary into a personal pension. At 50 you can put in 25 per cent. These limits mean you will have to build up extra money elsewhere.

You may be congratulating yourself that you have a pension and are contributing regularly. But the value of your contributions will be eroded by inflation unless you index them, says William Mercer. Suppose you have bitten the bullet and are contributing the annual amounts above. If they are indexed, they will provide you with an income of £7,500 a year in retirement. If you fail to index them, this income will fall to £6,058 by the time you are 50. Similarly, if you start by contributing a fixed monthly amount, say £100, and fail to raise it, you will end up with a tiny pension. At 30, your annual contribution of £1,200 would give you an annual retirement income of £2,053. But if you continued at £100 until you were 50, your contributions would buy an annual pension of just £248.

HULTON DEUTSCH

Hard times: life is not quite this bad today but the value of early saving must be strongly emphasised

Labour cloud hangs over utilities sector

In the closing days of last year, the board of Northern Electric finally succumbed to the overtures of CE Electric, the US utilities company. The hostile bid was marked by much controversy, with the US company scraping in with acceptances of just 50.3 per cent, but only after the deadline was extended.

The hard-fought battle for Northern Electric means that there are now only two independent regional electricity companies (Recs) left from the 12 sold off at between 120p and 280p per share at the end of 1990. Five of these Recs are now in the control of American companies.

At the beginning of last year, six regional electricity companies were still independent, while seven water companies from the ten sold off in 1989 were still independent. The previous 12 months had seen a huge shakeout in utilities, particularly the electricity companies. Eastern was taken over by Hanson. ManWeb was bought by ScottishPower, Norweb merged with North West Water and South Western Electricity was taken over by Southern Electric of the US. Most were sold for about 950p a share, giving private investors a healthy return on their original stake. They would also have benefited from a good yield of about 7 per cent on their investments. With the number of utility companies available for takeover rapidly diminishing, the competition for those remaining began to heat up last year.

> 'I would not recommend anyone to buy the two Recs for bid hopes'

In the summer, the Government blocked a bid by PowerGen, one of the three privatised generators, for Midlands, along with that of National Power for Southern. Only a few weeks later, two US companies, General Public Utilities of New Jersey and Cinergy of Ohio, launched a £1.73 billion bid for the company, which has been accepted by the board. Later in the year, the Americans scored again with an agreed £1.3 billion bid for East Midlands Electricity by Dominion Resources of the US at 670p per share. London Electricity became the next company to fall prey to a US company, when Entergy offered a price of 705p a share, in an agreed bid of £1.26 billion. The activity in the Recs means that the only two remaining independents are Yorkshire and Southern.

Matthew Wilson, of Natwest Stockbrokers, said: "There are a couple of US bidders circulating who have not been successful in getting hold of a Rec. They include Houston, Duke and Florida Light." He added: "Southern has quite a large market capitalisation, at about £2.05 billion — this would make it quite difficult to take over — while Yorkshire has a lower capitalisation of £1.27 billion."

Matthew Orr, of Killik & Co, said: "I would not recommend anyone to buy shares in the remaining two regional electricity companies in order to benefit from a takeover. It might be better to buy shares in one of the water companies."

Last year was a far quieter year for water. In 1995, bid activity in the water sector was just beginning to hot up with Northumbrian Water taken over by Lyonnaise at £11.79 per share, while Welsh Water was merged with South Wales Electricity, and Southern Water fell prey to the rather more domestic predator of ScottishPower. The company was bought up in an agreed takeover of £1.67 billion. However, the regulatory pressure began to increase on the water companies. Severn Trent and Wessex failed in their bids for South West Water. Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, blocked the bids, and the shares slid 130p to 575p.

Analysts forecast that one of the big influences on the utilities over the next year will be the political situation. Labour will impose a windfall tax on the utilities of up to £6 billion on the whole sector and may be more in favour of helping consumers in the form of bill rebates, rather than helping shareholders.

CAROLINE MERRELL

The Oeics revolution for units has arrived

From Monday a new type of collective investment fund can be launched in the United Kingdom (Gavin Lumsden writes).

The ugly sounding open-ended investment company (Oeic) is basically a hybrid of the existing investment and unit trusts.

Like investment trusts, Oeics will be companies listed on the Stock Exchange investing in the stocks and shares of other companies at home and abroad. As with investment trusts, Oeics will issue shares which investors can buy.

Unlike investment trusts, but similar to unit trusts, Oeics will be open-ended in that they will be able to create and cancel shares in response to the rise and fall in public demand.

But apart from the dreary technical details, there is a little something in Oeics for private investors to get excited about — single pricing.

Oeics will dispense with the arcane intricacies of bid and offer prices which unit and investment trusts use. Instead there will be one price, calculated daily on the basis of the net asset value of the Oeics's investments.

In addition to being easier to understand, single pricing should also make the fund managers' charges much more transparent. The open-ended investment companies also comply with Luxembourg investment rules which should allow UK fund managers to target the European markets.

Taken together, these two factors make it likely that most of the existing 1,500 unit trusts will be converted into Oeics by the year 2000. The Treasury has encouraged this by waiving stamp duty on such moves.

But don't wait for the rush. Few companies, with the exception of Murray Johnstone and Henderson Investors, plan to launch Oeics this year. Another unique feature of Oeics is that they will be able to issue several classes of share at once. This will make them complex to administer and most fund managers are updating their computer systems first.

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Barking loudly over 101 'rip-offs'

COMMENT

MARIANNE CURPHEY
Personal Finance Deputy Editor

The Consumers' Association is a watchdog with no teeth but the ability to bark loudly. This week it succeeded, via its magazine *Which?* in alienating the life insurance industry by claiming most personal pensions are rip-offs.

It claimed one of the worst buys was offered by the Prudential, the UK's biggest pension provider, with other poor products from Barclays, Lloyds and Midland.

The Association of British Insurers, the insurance industry's trade body, was indignant, accusing *Which?* of emotive claims to grab headlines. But as the saying goes, the life companies should be wary of throwing stones in glass houses. Life insurers should be setting their own affairs in order rather than attacking *Which?* for articulating the concerns of ordinary investors.

The industry in general has emerged with very little credit from the pensions mis-selling scandal. As we report on page 28 an estimated 520,000 employees in occupational schemes were wrongly advised to move to a personal pension scheme, and when the scale of the transfer was discovered, the industry was tardy over compensation. Three years on, fewer than 5 per cent of cases have been reviewed.

Even now, it is very difficult for prospective investors to compare pensions because of the different ways fees are levied. Too many products are inflexible and complicated and prospective customers are confused. But as we warn readers on page 26, people risk misery in old age if they delay a decision.

Trusts watched

CAVEAT EMPTOR is as important in the stock market as it is on the high street. There are plenty of cheap investment trusts around at the moment but the dilemma for investors is whether now is the time to buy. Your new purchase could turn out to be a disappointment as soon as you get it home. Investment trust shares often trade at a discount to assets. But sometimes this discount can widen or linger for so long that institutions seek action.

This year could see a rise in attempted takeovers with unsuccessful funds being gobbled up.

Serial savings

AS AN antidote to the usual lists of financial new year resolutions, *Weekend Money* today begins a series of articles to help you sort out your money in 1997. The first, on the opposite page, looks at pensions. The series won't slim your waistline after the Christmas excesses but could swell your bank balance.

Mobiles: a useful accessory — and a target for criminals

If Santa called, check your bill

Mobile phones were a popular present again this Christmas. But if the phone you found in your stocking was of the analogue type, check it carries a PIN number and let your first new year's resolution be to inspect carefully your calls bill each month. For if your number is cloned, then you could be paying the bill for other people's calls.

Criminals can clone unprotected phones via a scanner costing about £100. They can be used to steal the number of a personal mobile phone, together with the secret electronic serial number (ESN). The number is then inputted into another, often stolen, handset and used unknowingly at the original customer's expense. Airports, busy city centres, motorways and London hotels are the happy hunting grounds for the cloning villains.

One of the biggest problems is that cloners have learnt to use a victim's phone number not only silently but sparingly. They use several phones with the same number to spread the call load, hoping to escape detection for longer before they breach the calls limit and trigger an investigation by the network operator.

I have been cloned twice in five weeks, becoming a victim of what has been called the "fastest growing crime in Britain". On the second occasion a new number had been inputted into my two-year-old analogue handset by Cellcom, a service-providing arm of Cellnet, only two weeks earlier.

My problem came to light when Cellcom told me I had exceeded my calls limit only 15 days into my normal monthly account. I am a frugal user with a £29 limit set by Cellcom. By the time a cloner had been suspected, the illegal calls invoiced to me had gone to £36. I had made only £3 worth of calls. The total bill, including line rental and VAT was £69. The problem had been only partially resolved via Cellcom's fraud squad before the second cloner struck.

There are now 6.4 million mobile phone users in the UK, of whom three million have analogues. But a Private Member's Bill introduced by Ian Bruce, Tory MP for Dorset South, successfully had its second reading in mid-December, giving the industry a long-overdue Christmas present. The Bill, when enacted, is intended to make possession of scanning equipment and all such telecom fraud an arrestable offence. At the moment, illegal users of cloned phones have to be caught in the act to be charged with intent to defraud.

ALEC PARRETT

Caroline Merrell on recouping OFC losses

Future for ostrich investment is still up in the air

Coopers & Lybrand, the accountancy firm handling the liquidation of the crashed Ostrich Farming Corporation, believes it will recover less than half of the £22 million invested in the company by 2,700 investors.

The Official Receiver was called in last summer after the Department of Trade and Industry issued a winding-up order against the company. Investors were attracted by marketing literature which promised returns of more than 50 per cent. The promotional material emphasised the saleability of ostrich meat, which is low in fat and high in protein.

However, the DTI alleged the OFC spent investors' money on "disadvantageous contracts" to third parties. The Serious Fraud Office is now investigating.

One of the most difficult tasks for the liquidator to sort out has been the ownership of about 4,000 ostriches now residing in Belgium. In a letter to investors which was sent out last week, Coopers & Lybrand said it had "now received formal advice from senior counsel that title to the individual ostriches rests with the customers rather than the OFC". However, the liquidator points out that investors will only be able to take charge of their birds when an outstanding livery charge has been paid to Zooparc, another Ostrich company.

As well as clarifying the ownership of the birds, the liquidator also sets out two new investment options which could help the investors to recoup some of their losses.

One option involves investing in an ostrich farming company called Belautruche, which is backed by some of the original OFC investors. If the new venture can raise £1.5 million by January 10, then it can continue to farm the ostriches that investors have already purchased. Another option, which is in the process of being set up, involves a Scottish company called the Avian Farming Enterprise. Details of this scheme are scant, but investors can gain more information by telephoning 01749 674472.

The liquidator warned investors: "If you do nothing, I have been informed that, on or after January 31, 1997, Zooparc will take possession of any ostriches to which you may be entitled towards settlement of outstanding livery charges and any other costs."

Coopers & Lybrand also points out that it is possible for individual investors to make their own arrangements concerning the birds. "Contact should be made as soon as possible to arrange the collection of the ostriches."

It advises contacting Eddy Nachtergaele (0032 6976 9262), a Belgian farmer looking after the birds.

MARTIN BIDDALL

Ostriches promised sweet rewards but turned out to be a bitter investment for some

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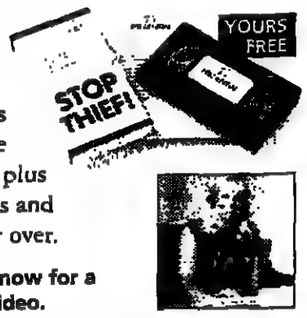

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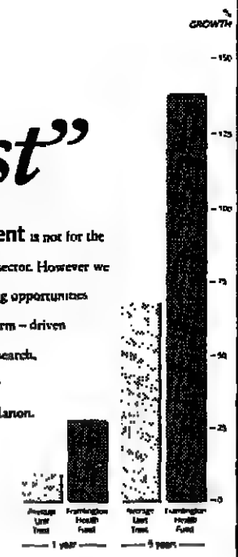

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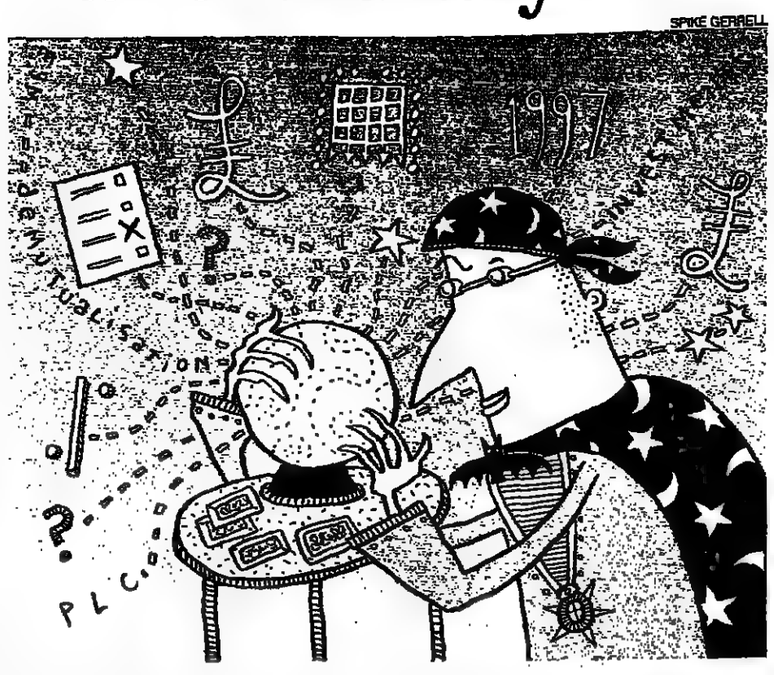
Millions will reap rewards as societies convert, **Gavin Lumsden** says

A financial diary for 1997

This year will be dominated by the plans of Halifax, Woolwich and Northern Rock building societies to become banks and the formal handover of Bristol & West to the Bank of Ireland. These will result in the handout of an estimated £19 billion of shares to ten million savers.



JANUARY

Both Halifax and the Woolwich send out transfer documents detailing their conversion plans and share distribution schemes. Attached are voting forms, which members *are urged to return speedily* as both societies will hold special meetings in February. Woolwich members have until the SGM to top up their accounts to their December 31, 1995, level. Halifax will indicate the likely price range of its shares.

The Finance Bill gets its second reading in the Commons. The Chancellor's November Budget becomes law.

Regulations for open-ended investment companies are laid before Parliament. The long wait for a single-priced fund with no bid/offer spread is nearly over. But the Securities and Investments Board has to approve OEICs formally at a board meeting this month.

Lloyds-TSB presents a private Bill in Parliament formally to merge the two organisations. This is unlikely to be completed before 1998.

With the general election looming, time is running out for the proposed Building Societies Bill. But Angela Knight, Economic Secretary, is keen to find space for it and has been talking to Labour about possible amendments to speed its passage through the House of Commons. A key issue is whether building societies will be allowed continue protection from takeover for five years after conversion.

FEBRUARY

Halifax holds a stadium-sized SGM at Sheffield Arena for members who want to attend — 50 per cent approval is needed. The Woolwich SGM is held.

The Stock Exchange announces which of the 60 nominated advisers on the Alternative Investment Market it will discipline. Doubts have been raised as to the integrity of many advisers and the quality of the companies they are allowing onto the AIM, the prep school for unquoted stocks before they join the exchange.

Expect the first open-ended investment company launch from a fund manager like Henderson Investors or Murray Johnstone.

An election? The Government may be forced to hold a *by-election in Wirral South* by the month end and may decide to go to the country if it thinks the result will be bad.

MARCH

About two million savers at Bristol & West and Northern Rock should receive details of the building society's offer to convert to a plc and how many free shares they will get. The SGM is likely to be in April.

The FT-SE Actuaries Committee decides if Halifax's entry into the FT-SE 100 and all-share indices in June will be delayed by three weeks. It *fears such a big issue bypassing* City institutions will distort the market and give the shares an artificially high price. *But a delay could have* the opposite effect as City tracker funds avoid the share, *causing a potential downward* spiral.

Norwich Union holds an EGM for its three million members eligible to vote on its plans to demutualise.

APRIL/MAY

Halifax members receive details of their proposed share allocation if they have approved conversion. They are *also told what it means to own* shares and information on how to buy and sell shares in Halifax plc.

May 1 — local election day. Most likely late date for the general election.

Unit trust and investment trust companies have to comply with new rules on disclos*ing their charges to investors.* Key features documents given to investors should include a table demonstrating the effect of charges.

May 22 — final possible date for general election.

JUNE

Halifax shares are listed on the London Stock Exchange.

JULY

Woolwich plc shares are listed on the Stock Exchange.

AUGUST

Distribution and full listing for Bristol & West.

OCTOBER

If its members have approved, Northern Rock plans to convert.

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M&G	105	98	78	32	46	53	47	58	40	24
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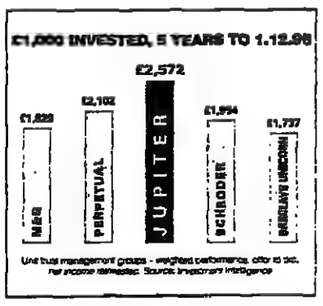

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Pensions victims start to settle out of court

Firms who wrongly advised people to transfer into personal pensions from company schemes are agreeing out-of-court settlements with their victims rather than go ahead with court hearings, it has emerged.

The first of a series of test *cases on pensions mis-selling* was scheduled to be heard last month in the Bristol Mercantile Court. But GAN Life settled out of court. A further hearing set for next month has also been settled.

At the start of last year the courts dismissed attempts by a number of insurance companies to stay proceedings against them by six claimants. The companies, which included the Prudential, GAN Life, TSB Life, Hill Samuel Life and Irish Life, had argued that the six should wait for their cases to be sorted out through the industry's own review of pensions mis-selling.

Ringrose Wharton, the firm of solicitors that brought the cases against the firms, welcomed the settlements. The firm is acting on behalf of 190 local government workers, nurses and other NHS staff who are members of the GMB, the Royal College of Nursing and Unison.

The Personal Investment Au*thority (PIA), which is in* charge of monitoring most firms guilty of potential mis-selling, admitted that most would miss a third priority deadline set for last Tuesday.

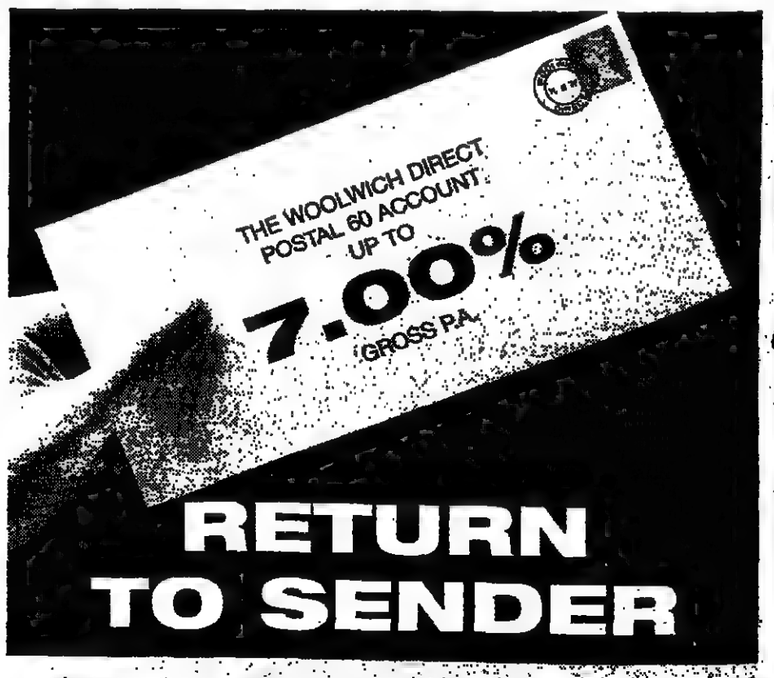
Offers of compensation were meant to have been made by then to anyone aged 35 or over who had opted out of their employer's existing scheme and anyone over 35 who had *not joined* their employer's scheme in the first place. Men aged between 50 and 54 and women aged 45 to 49 who transferred funds from pensions they had with former employers should also have received offers. Those who have retired, or who are about to retire, should have been compensated by earlier deadlines. But most have not.

In November the Securities and Investments Board, the City watchdog, announced moves to speed up compensation payouts by supposedly simplifying the information in*surance companies had to use* in calculating payments.

Just over three years ago it emerged that nine out of ten salesmen had almost certainly wrongly advised customers to transfer out of often generous employer's schemes into riskier personal pensions. It took the industry 18 months to produce formal guidelines for firms on how to reopen cases and calculate compensation.

By November 1996 the PIA admitted only 4,000 people had so far accepted offers of compensation. Fewer than 5 per cent of the estimated 520,000 victims had even had their reviews completed.

SARA MCCONNELL



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Interest will be payable net of the lower rate of income tax (currently 20%) or, subject to the required certification, gross. Where the tax deducted exceeds an investor's tax liability (if any), a claim may be made to the Inland Revenue for repayment of tax. For individuals whose income falls within the lower or basic tax bands, the tax deducted will match their liability to tax on the interest and they will have no more tax to pay on it. Individuals who are liable at the higher rate of income tax of 40% will have to pay additional tax on the interest to cover the difference between the tax deducted and the higher rate tax due. Interest will be calculated daily, from the fourth bank working day after receipt of a deposit by cheque. Cash deposits will not be accepted. Proof of identity will be required. The first withdrawal made in each calendar year of up to £10,000 may be made without notice or penalty. Further withdrawals may be made immediately subject to the loss of 60 days' interest. The account can be closed without penalty by giving 60 clear days' written notice. If a withdrawal is made where you incur a penalty you will not receive the stated interest rate. Interest rates are subject to variation. The minimum investment is £2,500. Full terms and conditions available on request. Woolwich Building Society, Corporate HQ, Watling Street, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7RR. PRD 6

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LETTERS

Self-assessment of tax and the issue of statements of accounts

From Mr R. C. Read

Sir, I can assure your correspondent, Mr Denis Fuller, that those who are "complacent" with regard to self-assessment (Weekend Money Letters, December 14) are not the only ones to get a nasty shock on receipt of their first statement of account.

As a pensioner whose resources can in no way be described as complex, I calculate my income tax dues myself, something I have done for several years with the aid of a personal computer. However, I still felt that it behoved me to take a reasonable interest in what was being proposed in the new system, to ensure that my computer program kept abreast of the new self-assessment system as it evolved. We were told that some millions would be spent on publicity matter to keep the public up to speed and so justify a swingeing system of penalties if we defaulted.

I first obtained a copy of the consultation self-assessment pack, which was published by Somerset House, in November 1994 and have since repeatedly asked for new documents on the special local rate helpline. The booklet published in June 1995, *A General Guide*, indicated that as a pensioner with investment income, I should not only read the book but could expect to be required to make two payments on account, and so I budgeted accordingly. Not being self-employed, I did not obtain the separate guide that was published for people in that category.

My understanding of the system was that anyone whose total tax liability (less capital gains and tax deducted at source) for 1995-96 was in excess of £500, would be asked to make equal payments on account towards this figure by January 31 and July 31, 1997. Those of us falling into this category would be informed well in advance by the Revenue.

That would not seem to be the case, however, since I have just received a statement of account requesting a single payment of another year's total tax by January 31, 1997, just eight months after paying the last bill for the same amount. I have not yet received all the investment income on which I have to pay tax and will not do so until the end of March 1997. A phone call to my tax office produced the gem that only the self-employed were entitled to make two payments on account, the rest being entitled only be allowed to make one in January.

I get the feeling that the Inland Revenue is actually having to work the system, they are writing the rules as they go along, as they go along. I feel sure that I cannot be the only person affected.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD READE,
14 Winding Wood Drive,
Camberley, Surrey.

Problem starts at the top

From Mr F. R. Robinson

Sir, In his letter ("Self-assessment shock awaits the complacent") of December 14, Denis Fuller, of Fuller Spurling & Co, writes of "apathy on the part of the taxpayer" vis-à-vis looming income tax self-assessment.

I would suggest that, as with many things in Britain at the present time, the problem starts at the top.

Mr Fuller suggests that the Government's publicity campaign towards self-assessment awareness should be stepped up.

Publicity is not the problem. I have on several occasions sent in the forms attached to government advertisements on the matter, to absolutely no avail.

It is the back-up to the publicity that appears to be lacking. Yet another example of what might be called the present Government's façade fixation. The reaction is not public apathy, but public disbelief.

Yours faithfully,
F. ROBINSON,
1st Floor Rear,
5 Arundel Terrace,
Brighton,
East Sussex.

When joint membership means discrimination

From Mr A. Hamilton, QC

Sir, My wife and I are joint policyholders in a life insurance policy with the Norwich Union, a mutual life company, intending flotation in 1997. We assumed that we were joint members. We were, as usual, recorded as "Mr & Mrs", ie, me as husband first.

On October 2, 1996, the flotation was announced, and we were told only one of us could be a member, that we could have nominated either of us as the member, but it was now too late, and I, being first named, was the member. On October 3, we nominated my wife and were told we were too late.

The result is blatant sex discrimination, against nearly all wives, who are joint policyholders and who are deprived of the benefit of the proposed "free" share issue.

I have repeatedly sought an explanation why our nomination of my wife cannot be accepted but have had no reply.

Yours faithfully,
ADRIAN HAMILTON,
63 Abbotsbury Road,
W14.

Halifax listing

From Mr S. Lourie

Sir, It is clear (FT-SE blow to Halifax shareholders, December 17) that the City is considering stitching up the people with mortgages and savings who would become shareholders of the Halifax Building Society if conversion goes ahead.

It is outrageous to read that "The FT-SE Actuaries UK Indices Committee which reviews the FT-SE 100 and FT-SE all-share indices, believes the lack of an institutional placing could distort the market and is considering a delay of up to three weeks before the Halifax joins the FT-SE 100".

The effect of this would be to depress the value of the shares and reduce the benefit to shareholders who wish to sell immediately. It is typical of the Halifax Building Society's disregard for its existing members that it is quoted as "taking a relaxed view, saying that institutional investors would slowly build up their stakes".

There is no doubt, if conversion is agreed by members, that they should get the benefit of any scramble for shares by the financial institutions. For this reason, it is correct that the company's shares should immediately enter the main FT-SE indices.

Yours faithfully,
SERGE LOURIE,
Halifax Action Group,
59 Burlington Avenue,
Kew Gardens, Richmond.

Distribution of free shares to associations

From Mr P. J. Grayson

Sir, For a number of years our association has been holding its funds in an Alliance & Leicester Building Society instant-access account, which we firmly believed would qualify for the issue of free shares after the society had converted in to a bank during 1997.

However, we have now been told that, because I hold a similar account in my own name, our association will not be issued with any free shares.

Evidently, this is because this building society registered the name of the accountholder as "P. J. Grayson" rather than "The West Ward Leisure Gardens Association" to and it now considers that I am the first-named member on two accounts. What a pity that the [illegible] number of our association, who did not have a qualifying account at the [illegible] date, had not been entered on their form DQ102 dated June 1996.

However, we have also been told that as I had been the honorary treasurer on December 31, 1995, this would not have altered the situation.

I wonder if, for the same reason, any other association whose funds do not belong to "the first-named member" has been told that they will not be entitled to any free shares?

Yours faithfully,
PETER GRAYSON
(Honorary Treasurer),
34, Glenthorne Close,
Brampton,
Chesterfield.

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*Source: Micropal, on a bid to bid basis with gross income re-invested from 01.11.95 to 01.11.96, since launch. †This makes no allowance for any management charges which are applicable to a PEP but our charges would not significantly alter the performance disparity. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. Tax assumptions are those currently applicable and are subject to statutory change. The value of tax relief will depend on your individual circumstances. All comparisons of cost apply to PEPs investing wholly in unit trusts. Full written details are available on request. All statements are correct as at 01.11.96. For your protection calls will usually be recorded and randomly monitored. Legal & General (Direct) Limited. Registered in England No. 2702080. Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TP. Representative only of the Legal & General marketing group, members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO for the purposes of recommending, advising on and selling life assurance and investment products bearing Legal & General's name.

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Legal & General
Investment Management

Are you leaving your heirs less tax more inheritance?

Naturally you want to leave all of your estate to your family or dependants or at least to someone of your choosing.

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And that share can be quite dramatic.

For example, on an estate of £600,000 (including house, contents, personal effects, stocks and shares, bonds, trusts, cash, life assurance and any inheritances) the Exchequer stands to be an equal beneficiary. If there were three children each would receive almost £150,000 but the Exchequer would take £154,000.

And it gets worse; above £215,000* the rate is a flat 40%. At Towry Law we can help you make plans to reduce your liability and pass on your accumulated wealth to your chosen beneficiaries.

Now think for a moment. I.H.T. does not just apply to the very rich, it applies to everybody with assets above £215,000.

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Note: levels and bases of, and reliefs from, taxation are subject to change. *Figures above are 1997/8.

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THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Ways to protect retirement funds

Towry Law, the independent financial planning specialist, has updated its concise guide examining the different financial aspects of retirement. *How to Make Your Money Work Harder in Retirement* explains how the erosive nature of inflation and taxation can affect retirement income. It explains how pension planning and phased retirement should be considered by those approaching retirement, as well as a section on "what to do when you reach retirement", estate planning and the different types of investment which should be considered.

BEALE DOBIE, which buys and sells second-hand endowment policies, has listed life companies that it believes are candidates for demutualisation this year. They are *Friends Provident*, Scottish Amicable, Scottish Widows and Standard Life. Other smaller companies that it believes may be the subject of *takeover bids rather* than demutualisation include Scottish Provident, NPI and Scottish Life.

STANDARD *Life Fund Management* (SLFM) is poised to launch the latest addition to its range of unit trust and personal equity plan products — a UK smaller companies trust. The trust will be launched on Monday and there is a special launch offer of a 1 per cent discount on the unit price for clients for 21 days until January 27. Standard Life's investment team manages about £800 million of UK smaller companies' stocks for the life and pension funds.

IN A week when Tessa 2 celebrates her first birthday, Birmingham Midshires, the UK's ninth largest building society, has confirmed it has taken almost £400 million into Tessas during 1996. It opened 60,000 accounts of which more than half were Tessa 2 follow-up accounts. The society runs an equity-linked Tessa where investors receive the benefit of any increase in the FT-SE 100 index over the five-year term, or, if the FT-SE falls, a guaranteed return of 20 per cent gross over the five-year term. The minimum investment is £9,000 and is for follow-up Tessas only. It also has variable-rate, fixed-rate *and escalator Tessas.*

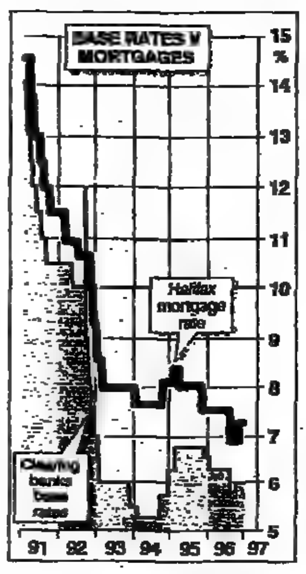
MARIANNE CURPHEY

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Teachers' BS 01202 887171	Bullion	Instant	£500	4.80	½ Yly
Yorkshire BS 0800 378836	1st Cls Acces	Postal	£1,000	5.15	Yly
Scarborough BS 0800 590578	Instnt Postal	Postal	£5,000	5.70	Yly
Bristol & West BS 0800 901109	Instnt Postal	Postal	£10,000	6.00	Yly

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Chelsea BS 0800 132351	Post-tel 20	20Day(p)	£5,000	6.05	Yly
First National BS 01232 314050	High Yield	30 Day	£25,000	6.45	Yly
Leopold Jos & Sons 0171 588 2323	40 Day Notice	40 Day	£10,000	6.22	Yly
Leeds & Holbeck BS 0113 225 7777	Postal Bonus	30.4.98p	£10,000	7.00	OM

FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Fixed	5 year	£8,575	7.50	F/Yly
NatWest Bank 0800 200400	Fixed	5 year	£5,000	7.45	F/Yly
Investec Bank 0171 626 0879	Premier	5 year	£9,000	7.20	Yly
Birm Midshires BS 0645 720721	Inflfn Beater	5 year	£1,000	7.00	Yly



CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

CREDIT CARDS	Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Co-Operative Bank 0800 1090004	Advantage Visa	0.64%NC	7.90% N	Nil
Capital One Bank 0800 669000	Visa	0.797%N	9.90%N	Nil
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	.9167%C	11.50%	Nil
RBS Advanta 0800 077770	Visa	0.94%N	11.90%N	Nil

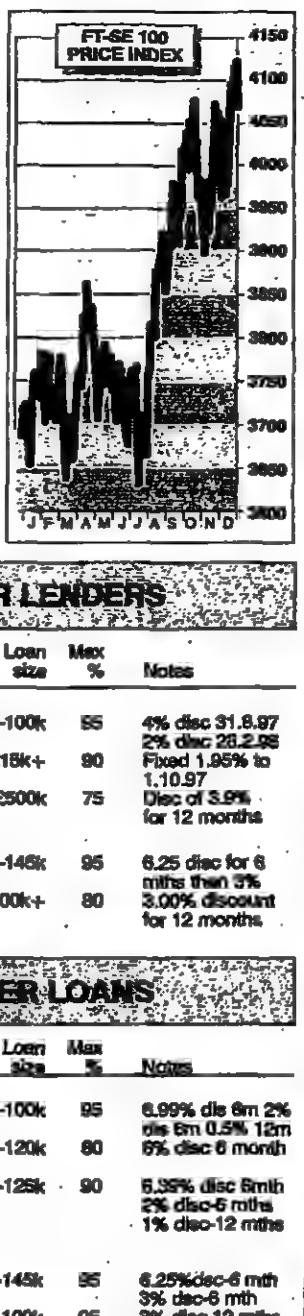
PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs with insurance	no insurance
Northern Rock BS 0345 421421	12.9%H	£112.66	£102.59
RBS Direct 0800 121125	14.0%	£114.78	£101.45
Direct Line 0141 248 9966	14.8%E	£114.25	£102.46
Nationwide BS via local branch	14.9%	£113.15	£102.49

Nb C = no interest free period, E = Available to comprehensive motor insurance policy holders over 22 years, F = Fixed Rate (all other rates variable), N = Introductory rate for a limited period, P = By Post only, OM = Interest paid on maturity

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01692 500 677)



NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Gross rate	At tax rates 20%	40%	Min/maximum investment £	Notice	Contact
Ordinary A/c¹	1.50	1.20	0.90	10-10,000**		0645 645000
Investment A/c*s	4.75	3.80	2.85	20-500***	1mth	0645 645000
Income Bond* s	6.00	4.80	3.60	2,000-25,000**	3mth	0645 645000
First Opt Bond s	6.00	4.80	3.60	1,000-20,000**		0645 645000
43rd Issue Cert†z	5.35			100-10,000	8day	0645 645000
Children's Bond†	6.75			25-1,000	1mth	0645 645000
Gen Ext Rate	3.51					0645 645000
Capital Bond s	6.65	5.32	3.99	100-250,000	8day	0645 645000
9th Index Linked†z	2.50			100-10,000	8day	0645 645000
Pensnrs Bond S3 s	7.00	5.60	4.20	500-50,000s	60day	0645 645000

¹ first £70 (£140 jt) of int tax free, inst accs for up to £100 ² Additional hldgs up to £20 000 for reinvested proceeds †Tax free *Rates gross and vble zGuaranteed when held for 5 years ᵃ0.2% net bonus for £20,000+ ᵇ£100,000 jt in addition to S1 and S2 holdings s Taxable but pd in full ¹£500-100,000 earn higher rates. **Tiered rates apply

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Canada Life ....Level	£9,901	£10,976	£12,444
Prudential ....Level	£9,860	£10,889	£12,295
StandardLf ....Level	£9,776	£10,844	£12,248
Equitab Lf............Level	£9,905	£10,824	£12,027
Sun Life ....Level	£9,731	£10,775	£12,198

SINGLE LIFE	Female: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Canada Life ....Level	£9,207	£10,009	£11,188
Prudential ....Level	£9,204	£9,956	£11,055
Sun Life ....Level	£8,990	£9,732	£10,824
Gen Accident.......Level	£8,907	£9,691	£10,837
Equitable Lf.........Level	£8,971	£9,658	£10,617

JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity)	Male: Age 60 / Female: Age 55	Age 65 / Age 60	Age 70 / Age 65
Canada Life ....Level	£8,785	£9,398	£10,270
Prudential ....Level	£8,768	£9,357	£10,184
Sun Life ....Level	£8,612	£9,189	£10,008
Equitable Lf.........Level	£8,660	£9,186	£9,908
Gen Accident.......Level	£8,517	£9,129	£9,996

* Maximum purchase £100,000. Higher rates for smokers.
Source: Annuity Direct (0171 588 9393)

Statistics compiled by Jackie Stradling

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at January 2, 1997

	Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year			
	5,000	Financial Assur	5.30
	10,000	Premium Life	5.50
	20,000	Premium Life	5.70
	50,000	Premium Life	5.80
2 Years			
	1,000	Premium Life	5.15
	3,000	ITT Lond & Ed	6.20
3 Years			
	1,000	Premium Life	5.50
	3,000	ITT Lond & Ed	6.30
	50,000	Premium Life	6.35
4 Years			
	1,000	Premium Life	5.85
	3,000	ITT Lond & Ed	6.35
	10,000	Premium Life	6.45
	20,000	Premium Life	6.55
	50,000	Premium Life	6.60
5 Years			
	1,000	Premium Life	5.90
	3,000	ITT Lond & Ed	6.70

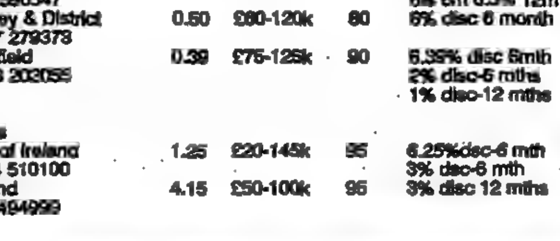
Source: Chamberlain de Broë 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

PIBS

FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	% Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Birmingham Midshires	9.375%	102.06	9.177	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.625%	124.47	9.339	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	139.92	9.291	100.20	10,000
Bristol & West	13.375%	143.28	9.335	100.34	1,000
Britannia	13.000%	139.46	9.322	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.125%	131.63	9.171	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	123.46	9.517	100.25	10,000
Halifax	8.750%	97.60	8.965	100.62	50,000
Halifax	12.000%	131.75	8.834	100.28	50,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.375%	145.43	9.197	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	118.82	9.033	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.625%	138.84	9.093	100.45	1,000
Northern Rock	12.625%	140.07	9.013	100.14	1,000
Skipton	12.875%	139.84	9.207	100.48	1,000

FLOATING RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	Issue price	Minimum purchase
Cheshire (28/09-27/03)	8.41563%	109.00	100.00	1,000
First Nat(20/09-20/03)	8.48750%	101.63	100.00	1,000

PIBS = Permanent interest-bearing shares
Source: ABN AMRO Hoare Govett — 0171 601 0101



LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Birm Midshires 01344 394000	3.24	£15k-100k	95	4% disc 31.8.97 2% disc 28.2.98
Bristol & West 0800 606088	1.95	£15k+	90	Fixed 1.95% to 1.10.97
Nationwide 0800 302010	3.09	to £500k	75	Disc of 3.9% for 12 months
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01734 510100	1.24	£20-145k	95	6.25 disc for 6 mths then 3%
Midland 0800 494999	3.99	£100k+	80	3.00% discount for 12 months

LARGER LOANS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Scarboro 0800 590547	0.25	£30-100k	95	6.99% dis 6m 2% dis 6m 0.5% 12m
Chorley & District 01257 279373	0.60	£60-120k	80	6% disc 6 month
Mansfield 01246 202055	0.39	£75-125k	90	6.35% disc 6mth 2% disc-6 mths 1% disc-12 mths
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01734 510100	1.25	£20-145k	95	6.25%disc-6 mth 3% disc-6 mth
Midland 0800 494999	4.15	£50-100k	95	3% disc 12 mths

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Bristol&West 0800 606088	1.95	£15k+	95	5.04% disc 6 mnth then 1% disc-6mth
Coventry 0800 126125	5.11	to £125k	95	2.14% disc 12 mth
Lambeth 0171 928 1331	3.99	£15-150k	95	3.25% disc for 12 months.
Banks				
Bankofireland 01734 510100	1.24	£20-145k	95	6.25% disc 6 mths 3% disc 6 mths
TSB Bank 0500 758000	3.51	£15k+	95	3.74% disc for 12 months.

Larger lenders, loans and first-time buyers tables by Blay's Guides Ltd (01753 880482)

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UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE INVESTMENTS

	Bid	Offer	Wkly +/-	Yld %
AEGON LIFE ASSURANCE Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh, EH12 9SE 0131 339 9191				
Balanced	523.90	554.40	-2.30	
UK Equity	706.40	747.60	-1.30	
Property	407.50	431.30	-0.30	
Fixed Interest	361.60	382.70	-2.60	
Money	270.50	286.30	-0.20	
International	398.50	421.70	-6.80	
ABBEY LIFE Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth BH8 8AL 01202 292373				
Custodian S4	196.00	206.40	+0.40	
Ethical S4	164.60	174.40	+3.10	
International S4	214.40	225.70	-0.10	
Protected Gth S4	124.30	130.90	...	0
Asian Pacific	200.80	211.40	+1.20	
European S4	214.10	225.40	-0.20	
Prop Fd Ser 4	399.80	421.00	...	
Equity Ser 4	277.10	291.70	+1.70	
Man Ser 4	785.20	[illegible]	-3.60	
Conv Ser 4	359.10	374.00	-0.20	
Money Ser 4	354.70	373.40	-0.20	
Fixed Int Ser 4	389.00	410.00	-0.40	
American Ser 4	654.00	688.50	-1.80	
High Inc Ser 4	434.90	457.80	+7.60	
Indexed Int Ser 4	231.70	243.90	-0.20	
Japan Ser 4	295.10	310.70	-2.50	
ALBANY LIFE 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AJ 01707 42311				
Equity Fd Acc	1976.70	2080.70	+0.40	
European Fd Acc	468.40	493.40	-0.50	
Fixed Int Acc	569.10	599.00	-4.60	
Gtd Money Acc	361.70	380.80	-0.20	
Intl Managed Acc	720.10	758.00	-1.20	
Int Fxd Int Acc	369.00	389.00	-1.90	
Japan Fund	221.50	233.10	-1.70	
N American Acc	416.10	437.90	-9.20	
Prop Fd Acc	478.60	503.70	-1.10	
Multiple Inv Acc	1227.40	1291.00	-1.40	
ALLIED DUNBAR ASSURANCE Swindon SN1 1EL 01793 514514				
Fxd Int Dep Acc	405.40	426.80	-0.30	
Equity Acc	1722.60	1813.30	-3.80	
Property Acc	662.00	696.90	-5.30	
Far East Acc	319.30	336.20	-0.30	
Managed Capital	610.90	643.10	-1.50	
-do- Acc	1312.90	1382.00	-3.30	
Overseas Acc	1196.30	1259.30	-2.20	
Gilt Edged Acc	551.00	580.00	-4.30	
Amer Equity Acc	1085.40	1142.60	-24.00	
Amer Man Acc	455.20	479.20	-9.50	
Amer Prop Acc	116.90	123.10	-0.70	
Distribution Bonds	25.40	27.01		
AXA EQUITY & LAW LIFE ASSURANCE Amersham Road, High Wycombe, Bucks 01494 463463				
Reserve Ser 6	178.10	187.40	...	
Balced Ser 6	456.80	481.00	-1.00	
Opportunity Ser 6	194.10	204.30	-0.60	
Distribution Ser 6	105.60	111.10	+0.10	6.44
UK Equities Ser 6	[illegible]	[illegible]	-3.60	
Higher Inc Ser 6	[illegible]	[illegible]	+5.50	
North Amer Ser 6	580.40	610.90	-15.90	
Far East Ser 6	549.40	578.30	-9.10	
Europe Ser 6	473.40	498.30	+0.40	
Intnl Ser 6	769.40	810.00	-8.60	
Property Ser 6	608.00	640.00	+3.70	
Fixed Int Ser 6	494.00	519.90	-1.50	
Ind Lnkd Sec Ser 6	200.90	211.40	-0.50	
Gteed Dep Ser 6	322.70	339.60	-0.40	
BARCLAYS LIFE 252 Romford Road, London E7 9JB 0181 534 5544				
Equity Acc	1076.50	1133.20	-1.10	
-do- Initial	661.10	695.90	-0.60	
Gilt Edged Acc	439.40	462.60	-3.00	
-do- Initial	272.40	286.80	-1.90	
International Acc	448.80	472.50	-5.10	
-do- Initial	276.20	290.80	-3.20	
Managed Acc	629.70	662.90	-2.10	
-do- Initial	386.90	407.30	-1.30	
Money Acc	315.70	331.90	+0.20	
Property Acc	319.90	336.90	-0.60	
-do- Initial	196.90	207.30	-0.40	
American Acc	366.60	385.90	-12.00	
Far East Gwth	252.10	265.40	-3.30	
Financial Acc	473.70	498.70	-0.70	
500 Accum	528.80	556.70	-3.90	
Japan Acc	237.00	250.20	-1.40	
Income Acc	637.20	670.80	+0.50	
Leisure Acc	327.10	344.40	+1.10	
Special Sits Acc	326.30	343.50	-0.20	
Uni-Tech Acc	183.10	192.80	-1.90	
BLACK HORSE LIFE Mountbatten House, Chatham, Kent ME4 4JF 01634 834000				
The Managed Fd	949.01	999.01	-4.18	
Income Fund	934.15	983.32	-2.56	
Extra Income	546.26	575.01	-1.18	
Worldwide Gth	540.58	569.04	-4.20	
Balanced Fund	832.51	876.33	-2.61	
Smllr Cos Recvy	[illegible]	[illegible]	+12.07	
N Amer & Genrl	466.26	490.81	-8.43	
Pacific Basin	431.37	454.04	-2.59	
German Growth	256.85	270.37	-2.34	
Japan Growth	153.22	161.29	-1.23	
The UK Gth Fd	270.80	285.16	-0.87	
Conti Euro Gth	164.52	173.18	-1.57	
Property Fund	429.95	452.58	+0.62	
Fixed Interest	370.46	389.96	-1.74	
Cash Fund	310.51	326.86	+0.22	
Managed Inc	567.21	597.07	-2.73	
Nth Amer Recov	319.05	336.78	+4.47	
America Fund				
Managed Gth	539.05	566.37	-1.71	
BRITANNIA 50 Bothwell St, Glasgow G2 6HR 0141 248 2000				
Measured Perf	198.60	210.10	+1.10	
Performance Plus	228.60	241.90	...	
Wealth Protn Perf	199.00	[illegible]	+0.30	
UK Opportunity	255.30	270.10	+3.10	...
Euro Opportunity	274.70	290.60	+1.20	...
North Amer Opp	237.50	251.60	-4.30	...
Far East Opp	307.20	319.10		
Wlth Prop Ser 1	173.90	183.10		
Gth Prop Ser 2	212.40	224.70	+1.20	...
Fixed Int	229.10	242.40	-2.30	...
Cash	171.40	181.30	+0.10	6.49
Overseas	263.50	278.60	-0.10	...
Formerly LAS				
Managed Fund	[illegible]	437.90	+2.40	...
UK Equity	772.20	812.90	+9.20	...
Property	393.10	[illegible]	+2.20	...
Money Market	271.50	285.60	+0.20	...
Fixed Interest	332.80	350.40	-3.10	...
Japan	302.90	318.90	-3.00	...
North America	211.60	222.60	-3.80	...
International	407.10	428.60	-0.10	...
European	351.30	369.80	+1.50	...
Far East	153.40	161.50		...
CANADA LIFE 24 High Street, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 5BA 01707 51122				
Equity Growth 1	292.80			
Managed	397.40	418.40	+1.70	
Property	264.00	277.90	+3.20	
Gilt & Fxd Int	273.20	287.60	+1.40	
Equity	477.91	502.70	+6.00	
Cash	231.40	243.70	+0.20	
CLife Euro Mgd	[illegible]	472.00	-7.20	
CLife Intl Fd	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
Managed Fund	947.80	992.40	+7.10	
Property Fund	394.20	[illegible]	+1.10	
Equity Fund	1178.80	1240.40	+9.00	
Gilt Edged Fd	699.50	736.70	+2.40	
Deposit Fund	358.10	376.90	+0.40	
Investment Fd	515.70	541.50	+4.40	
International	609.01	636.80	-2.90	
CITY OF WESTMINSTER ASSURANCE Sentry House, 500 Avebury Blvd, Milton Keynes MK9 2NU 01908 606101				
Property Fund	171.40	180.50		
Managed Fund	747.00	787.20	-3.20	
Equity Fund	450.40	474.20	-1.20	
CLERICAL MEDICAL/FIDELITY INVESTMENTS Narrow Plain, Bristol BS2 0JH, 0117 929 0566				
Assurance Funds				
Sapphire Mixed	343.40	361.50	-0.30	
Ruby	200.00	210.00	-0.10	
Emerald	159.70	168.20	-0.40	
Equity	414.90	436.40	+0.90	
Property	241.90	254.70	-0.30	
Gilt & Fixed Int	230.00	242.20	-1.30	
Indexed Secs	184.80	194.60	-0.00	
Cash	202.70	213.40	+0.10	
Nth American	296.00	311.60	-6.20	
Far East	301.90	317.80	-2.60	
International	271.70	286.10	-1.90	
Special Sits	456.00	480.10	+2.80	
Intl Income	363.70	382.90	+1.10	
European	400.90	422.00		
Japanese	115.50	121.60	+1.20	
SE Asia	405.80	427.20	+2.40	
With Profits Bnr	187.30	197.20	-0.20	
-do- Spec	187.30	197.20	+0.20	
Flexible Retirement Plans Funds				
Mixed	399.60	420.70	-0.50	
Equity	509.40	536.30	-0.40	
Property	227.70	239.70	-2.40	
Gilt & Fixed Int	298.90	314.70	-2.40	
Index Linked	195.40	205.90	-1.10	
Cash	278.10	292.80	+0.10	
Nth American	361.60	380.70	-9.20	
Far East Acc	297.60	313.30	-3.50	
International Acc	337.80	355.60	-2.10	
Special Sits	685.80	721.90	+3.40	
European Flex	[illegible]	[illegible]	+1.10	
COLONIAL MUTUAL GROUP Colonial Mutual House, Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4YY, 01634 890000				
(Unit) Key 1	242.04			
-do- Pacemaker 1	380.12			
-do- Cash	217.91	229.38	+0.14	
-do- Equity	658.82	693.29	-0.71	
-do- Fxd Int	405.39	427.25	-1.34	
-do- Managed	470.49	495.25	-1.09	
-do- Property	344.45	362.56	-0.63	
(Pens) Cash Cap	215.20	226.54	+0.07	
-do- Cash Ins	338.90	356.72	+0.34	
-do- Equity Cap	[illegible]	[illegible]	-3.25	
-do- Equity Ins	[illegible]	[illegible]	-3.17	
-do- Fixed Cap	437.00	460.01	-1.66	
-do- Fixed Ins	[illegible]	724.37	-0.35	
-do- Index Cap	211.45	[illegible]	-1.63	
-do- Index Ins	332.07	350.50	-2.33	
-do- Mngd Cap	685.87	721.86	-2.01	
-do- Mngd Ins	[illegible]	[illegible]	-2.29	
COMMERCIAL UNION St Helen's, 1 Undershaft, EC3 0171 283 7500				
Var Ann Acc (5) 1	146.65		+6.94	
Var Ann (5) 1	109.97		+0.43	
Prime Managed	476.40	501.50	-0.80	
Prime UK Equity	615.10	647.50		
Prime Int Equity	324.00	341.10	-1.40	
Prime Property	252.30	265.60	-0.30	
Prime Fxd Int	261.80	275.60	-0.00	
Prime Index-Lnk	185.10	195.10	-0.00	
Prime Cash	222.00	233.70	+0.30	
CONFEDERATION LIFE Lytton Way, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2NN 01438 744840				
Managed Fund	1286.90	1354.70		0
Equity II	1906.70	2007.00		
For Crown see Windsor				
EAGLE STAR LIFE ASSURANCE Montpellier Drive, Cheltenham, GL53 7LQ 01242 221311				
Life Funds				
Uk With Pfts (4n0) 1	110.60		+0.20	
Secure (2) 1	106.70		+0.10	
Managed (3) 1	115.80		+0.10	
Equity Mngd (5) 1	115.70			
Adventurous (3) 1	106.50		+0.20	
Bristol & West (2) 1	107.90	...	-0.20	
Equity Mgd S1	284.80	299.80	-0.30	
Managed S1	284.30	299.30	-0.30	
Adventurous S1	223.20	235.00	-0.60	
Managed (2)	190.90	201.00	-0.20	
Pension Funds				
Unit With Pfts (9) 1	169.50	...	+0.20	
Secure (2) 1	106.30	...	+0.10	
Managed (2) 1	112.40	...		
Equity Mngd (2) 1	113.20	...		
Adventurous (2) 1	103.70	...	-0.20	
Bristol & West (2) 1	107.50	...	+0.20	
EAGLE STAR/MIDLAND 60 St Mary Axe, London EC3, 0171 929 1111				
Eagle/Mid Uts	362.80	379.40	-1.70	0.01
FRIENDS' PROVIDENT Castle Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SH 01722 413366				
Managed	372.40	392.10	-0.40	
UK Equity	521.20	548.70	-0.60	
Stewardship	461.40	485.70	+1.40	
Overseas Equity	334.90	352.50	-2.30	
North American	196.40	206.80	-4.90	
Pacific Basin	173.40	183.00	-0.90	
European	337.60	355.40	-0.30	
Property	185.40	195.20	-0.30	
Fixed Interest	269.90	284.20	-2.70	
Index Linked	187.00	196.90	-0.70	
Cash	217.60	229.10	+0.20	
FP Life Assurance ex NM				
Fixed Interest	[illegible]	625.60	-5.70	
Managed	820.00	864.00	-6.10	
Deposit	371.40	390.90	+0.40	
Property	524.40	552.20	-10.40	
American	[illegible]	557.40	-15.00	
Australian	629.10	662.20	-4.70	
European	717.10	754.80	-1.60	
Income Acc	910.60	958.50	+3.90	
-do- Dist	[illegible]	523.00	+2.70	4.49
International	352.20	370.70	-2.80	
Japan Smaller	376.50	396.30	-3.20	
Singapore & Mal	421.50	443.60	-0.60	
Smaller Cos	507.90	534.50	-0.10	
Tokyo Fund	560.00	[illegible]	-5.00	
UK Equity	703.90	740.90	-5.90	
CCM Varied Mg	[illegible]	[illegible]	-1.10	
GT GLOBAL FUND MGMT LTD Alban Gate, 14th Flr, 125 London Wall, London EC2Y 5AS, 0171 710 4567				
GT Plan Far East	324.90	341.90	-2.50	
GT Plan Wwide	540.00	570.90	-3.70	
GAN LIFE & PENSIONS Gan House, Harlow, Essex CM20 2EW 01279 626262				
Portfolio Acc	780.30	790.30	-1.40	
-do- Inc A	786.70	828.20	-1.90	
UK Equity	501.60	528.10	-2.30	
Gilt Plus	225.30	237.20	-1.00	
Managed	[illegible]	[illegible]	-0.80	
GENERAL ACCIDENT 2 Rougier St, York YO1 1HR 01904 628982				
Managed	248.60	261.60	-0.30	
Unitised Profit	158.50	166.80	-0.20	
UK Equity	362.00	381.00	-0.60	
Fixed Int	218.40	229.80	-0.80	
Index-Linked	181.50	191.00	-1.10	
Cash Deposit	187.90	197.80		
Property	182.80	192.30	+0.30	
International	194.10	204.30	-1.30	
American	212.20	223.30	-5.00	
Japan	201.60	212.10	-1.30	
Japan Smllr Cos	206.40	217.20	-1.40	
European	215.60	226.80	-0.40	
Pacific Fund	308.90	325.10	-1.20	
Cons Life	159.20	166.40	-0.90	
Formerly Provident Mutual				
Managed Ord	567.20	597.10	-0.80	
Managed Initial	357.40	376.20	-0.70	
Equity Ord	914.60	962.70	-1.50	
Equity Init	576.40	606.70	-0.60	
I-Linked Gilt Ord	221.20	232.80	-1.40	
I-Linked Gilt Init	145.60	153.30	-0.60	
Ovsas Equity Ord	426.30	448.60	-3.70	
Ovsas Equity Init	267.50	281.50	-2.50	
Property Ord	282.70	298.60	-0.30	
Property Init	178.00	188.20	-0.10	
Fixed Int Ord	319.10	339.90	-1.40	
Fixed Int Init	201.10	211.70	-0.90	
Deposit Ord	223.40	235.20	+0.20	
Deposit Initial	141.10	148.50		
GUARDIAN ROYAL EXCHANGE Royal Exchange London EC3, 0171 283 7101				
Ass Prop Bds	879.10	925.70	[illegible]	
Managed Initial	537.90	566.70	-1.50	
-do- Acc	867.30	913.60	-1.90	
Equity Initial	865.20	911.30	-2.60	
-do- Acc	1291.70	1360.80	-4.40	
Fixed Int Initial	470.50	495.30	-5.30	
-do- Acc	703.10	740.10	-7.40	
Intl Initial	490.40	514.30	-5.60	
-do- Acc	733.10	769.90	-8.10	
Nth Amer Initial	234.40	242.00	-6.00	
-do- Acc	325.60	342.70	-9.20	
Pacific Initial	211.00	222.10	-2.90	
-do- Acc	284.30	299.20	-3.30	
Property Initial	184.10	193.70	-1.40	
-do- Acc	275.00	289.50	-2.70	
Index-Lnkd Initl	168.40	177.20	-1.20	
-do- Acc	229.00	241.00	-1.50	
Deposit Initial	205.20	216.00		
-do- Acc	306.70	322.80	+0.20	
Euro Initial	123.40	129.80	-0.30	
-do- Acc	155.10	163.30	-0.30	
HALIFAX LIFE LTD PO Box 288, York YO1 1YE 01904 611110				
Life Funds				
Foundation	30.31	31.91	-0.05	
Balanced	30.31	31.90	-0.05	
Opportunity	31.11	32.75	-0.10	
Deposit	25.48	26.82	-0.02	
Pension Funds				
Foundation	31.57	33.23	-0.12	
Balanced	31.39	33.04	-0.09	
Opportunity	[illegible]	[illegible]	-0.17	
Deposit	[illegible]	27.44	+0.02	
HAMBRO ASSURED Harbour House, Portway, Preston, Lancs PR2 2PR, 01772 840000				
Managed	200.30	210.80	-0.90	
-do- Pens	255.40	268.90	-1.50	
UK Equity	215.90	227.30	-0.50	
-do- Pens	258.40	272.00	-1.00	
International	166.10	174.90	-1.80	
-do- Pens	183.70	192.60	-2.20	
Deposit	150.30	158.10	-0.10	
-do- Pens	182.50	192.10	+0.30	
HILL SAMUEL LIFE NLA Tower, Addiscombe Road, Croydon 0181 686 4355				
Security Fund	698.00	734.70	+4.00	
British Fund	697.30	737.00	+0.60	
International	616.00	651.90	-4.20	
Dollar Fund	545.20	577.00	-11.00	
Capital Fund	590.20	620.40	-0.40	
Income Fund	867.40	917.00	+1.90	
Property Series A	508.50	538.10	-4.10	4.90
Property Units	549.40	587.70	-6.90	
Financial Fund	786.00	839.90	-2.00	
Managed Ser A	651.20	689.20	-0.70	
Managed Units	1174.00	1236.30	-1.20	
High Yield Fund	781.20	826.80	-2.60	
Money Series A	313.60	331.90	-0.40	
Money Units	419.00	441.10	+0.70	
Equity Fund	756.20	795.90	-0.60	
Fixed Interest	418.40	443.20	-5.30	
Indexed Secs	204.70	216.70	-1.70	
European Fund	974.00	1030.20	-1.60	
Natural Res	312.60	331.10	-3.30	
Far East Fund	621.20	657.50	-3.30	
Smaller Cos	[illegible]	706.00	-10.10	
Special Sits	639.20	675.40	+2.00	
Man Currency	274.40	290.20	-1.90	
Japanese Tech	281.60	297.50	+0.70	
US Smaller Cos	440.40	466.10	-1.80	
Formerly Target Life Assurance Co Ltd				
Deposit	268.00	282.10	+0.30	
Financial Ser 1	63.10	67.40	-0.20	
Fixed Interest	367.20	386.60	-2.30	
Gold	80.20	84.80	-1.90	
Managed	729.00	761.20	-1.40	
Mngd Growth	230.60	242.50	-0.70	
Mngd Opp	243.90	256.80	-1.10	
Property	366.30	385.70	+1.60	
Residential Prop	114.50	120.70	+2.00	
TSB American	310.50	326.70	-13.20	
TSB Brit Gwth	1075.00	1132.30	-27.70	
TSB European	330.40	347.90	-0.70	
TSB Income	507.60	534.30	-2.00	
TSB Intl	469.00	494.20	-7.80	
TSB Intl Inv	344.20	362.40	-6.50	
TSB Pacific	437.50	460.60	-2.30	
TSB Prem Inc	319.80	332.00	-2.00	
IRISH LIFE ASSURANCE Irish Life Centre, Victoria Street, St Albans, Herts AL1 3TF, 01727 48881				
Global Managed	678.80	714.50		
Global Property	321.10	338.00		
Global Fixed Int	586.40	617.30		
Global Equity	741.70	780.70		
Global Cash	271.60	285.60		
LAURENTIAN LIFE Barnwood, Gloucester GL4 7RZ 01452 371371				
Property	546.30	576.90	+0.30	
Managed	[illegible]	538.80	-0.40	
American	510.70	537.50	-9.50	
UK Equity Fd	561.70	591.20	-1.50	
Japan	165.50	174.20	-1.00	
Index-Link	201.30	211.80	-1.00	
High Yield	[illegible]	1093	-4.00	
Money	436.20	459.10	+0.30	
International	411.00	433.40	-2.70	
Henderson Active	222.10	233.70	-1.90	
Perpetual Active	359.20	377.50	+4.00	
Growth Acc	278.00	292.70	-0.20	
Gilt Edged	479.10	503.30	-3.10	
European	168.70	177.50		
Far East	225.10	236.80	+0.40	
LEGAL & GENERAL UNIT ASSURANCE 2 Montefiore Road, Hove, Sussex BN3 1SE 01273 524000				
B'soc Fe (L) Inv	134.85	141.90		
-do- Acc	197.20	208.20		
Bnr Props Fd	174.50	183.70	-0.60	
-do- Acc	230.40	242.50	+1.70	
Cash Initial	172.00	179.00	-0.40	
-do- Acc	312.00	329.10	-0.10	
Equity Initial	792.10	833.80	-1.50	
-do- Acc	1451.70	1528.20	-1.30	
Fixed Initial	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
-do- Acc	677.00	712.70	-4.20	
Index-Lnkd Gilt	179.10	188.50	-0.30	
-do- Acc	212.50	224.00	+0.10	
Intl Initial	332.70	350.30	-2.00	
-do- Acc	600.20	631.80	-3.50	
Managed Initial	533.80	561.80	-2.00	
-do- Acc	972.20	1023.30	-1.80	
Property Initial	226.20	238.20	-0.10	
-do- Acc	414.00	436.30	+1.00	
LINCOLN NATIONAL The Quays, 101-105 Oxford Road, Uxbridge, Middx UB8 1LZ 01895 200200				
Equity Units	163.78	...	+34.00	
Property Units	[illegible]	[illegible]	-1.90	
Bal Bd Exec Unit	77.41	81.49	-2.00	
2nd Equity Acc	774.80	815.50	-1.60	
2nd High Inc Acc	748.40	787.80	-2.70	
2nd Property Acc	256.10	269.60	-0.20	
2nd Mngd 2 Acc	192.80	203.00	-0.70	
2nd Mngd 3 Acc	538.60	566.90	-0.20	
2nd Mngd 4 Acc	252.50	275.80	-0.20	
2nd Deposit Acc	307.60	323.90	+0.30	
2nd Gilt Acc	340.80	357.50	-2.30	
2nd Amer Acc	385.40	405.70	-14.00	
2nd Intl Mny Acc	243.80	256.60	-0.90	
2nd Index Acc	224.50	236.40	-1.10	
2nd Far East Acc	415.10	436.50	-0.30	
2nd Gilted Acc	182.90	191.80	-1.50	
2nd Euro Acc	182.40	192.00	+0.40	...
2nd Japan Acc	151.20	159.20	-1.40	...
2nd Int Cr Bd Acc	170.80	179.80	-1.10	...
2nd Cap Gth Acc	131.70	139.70		...
LONDON LIFE 100 Temple Street, Bristol, BS1 6EA 0117 984 7777				
Equity 1	[illegible]	...	+2.10	...
Fixed Interest 1	[illegible]	...	-3.40	...
Property 1	[illegible]	...	+3.00	...
Deposit 1	[illegible]	...	+0.40	...
Mixed 1	[illegible]	...	+0.20	...
Indexed Stock 1	200.20	...	-1.30	...
International 1	317.50	...	-1.10	...
Equity A 1	290.90	...	+0.90	...
Fixed Int A 1	215.90	...	-1.50	...
Property A 1	201.60	...	+2.10	...
Deposit A 1	167.01	...	+0.30	...
Mixed A 1	227.40	...	+0.10	...
Index Stock A 1	187.60	...	-1.00	...
International A 1	197.90	...	-0.60	...
Equity P 1	[illegible]	...	+2.40	...
Fixed Int P 1	661.30	...	-4.30	...
Property P 1	362.00	...	+4.20	...
Deposit P 1	[illegible]	...	+0.60	...
Mixed P 1	[illegible]	...	-0.50	...
Index Stock P 1	234.70	...	-1.40	...
International P 1	372.40	...	-1.20	...
LONDON & MANCHESTER ASSURANCE Winslade Park, Exeter EX5 1DS, 01392 282456				
Inv Trust Cap 1	[illegible]	...	-2.40	
-do- Acc 1	1090.50	...	-3.30	
Property Cap 1	141.70	...	+0.60	
-do- Acc 1	248.50	...	+1.20	
Fxd Interest Cap 1	300.30	...	-0.70	
-do- Acc 1	354.00	...	-0.90	
Equity Cap 1	365.70	...	-0.50	
-do- Acc 1	650.00	...	+0.10	
Internatl Cap 1	233.60	...	-3.60	
-do- Acc 1	415.60	...	-5.40	
Gtd Deposit Cap 1	160.90	...	+0.10	
-do- Acc 1	282.00	...	+0.10	7.20
Flexible Cap 1	371.80	...	-1.70	
-do- Acc 1	660.30	...	-3.20	
Moneymaker Fd 1	510.80	...	-2.30	
Capital Growth 1	2144.20	...	-3.30	
M & G Victoria Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1FB 01245 266266				
Amer Bond Acc	534.50	562.60	-15.00	
Amer Rec Bond	621.50	652.60	-7.90	
Am Smlr Cos Bd	290.90	306.90	-4.10	
Australasia Bd	313.00	329.20	-0.60	
Commodity Bond	388.20	407.70	-1.90	
Deposit Bond Acc	340.80	410.40	+0.20	
Equity Bond Acc	1791.90	1891.60	-8.70	
European Bd Acc	480.40	504.50	+1.60	
Extra Yld Bd Acc	911.20	956.80	-0.50	
Gilt Bond Acc	495.50	520.40	-7.00	
Gold Bond Acc	165.90	174.30	-2.10	
High Yield Bond	377.70	396.70	+1.70	
Index-Lnk Gt Bd	227.30	239.60	-1.90	
International Bd	851.10	895.70	-6.40	
Japan Bond Acc	198.10	208.10	-1.50	
Japan Sml Cos Ac	190.50	200.10	-1.40	
Managed Bonds	1025.60	1080.00	-8.70	
Prop Bond Acc	467.50	490.00	-3.30	
Rec Bond Acc	406.70	423.10	-14.90	
S East Asia Bd Acc	353.00	371.60	-7.30	
MGM ASSURANCE MGM House, Heene Road, Worthing BN11 2DY, 01903 204631				
UK Equity	276.60	291.00	-0.00	
UK Equity Acc	419.40	441.50	-0.90	
Special Sits	115.20	121.30	-0.20	
Special Sits Acc	154.90	164.20	-0.10	
North American	224.40	236.30	-5.40	
N American Acc	340.50	358.50	-8.00	
Pacific Basin	341.40	359.40	-1.50	
Pacific Basin Acc	510.10	536.40	-1.90	
Fixed Interest	309.30	[illegible]	-2.30	
Fixed Interest Acc	453.60	480.40	-2.40	
Property	192.30	[illegible]	+1.00	
Property Acc	276.90	291.50	+1.90	
Deposit	154.60	162.80		
Deposit Acc	234.90	247.30	+0.20	
Managed	298.50	314.20	-1.10	
Managed Acc	417.50	439.50	-1.30	
MERCHANT INVESTORS St Bartholomew's House, Lewins Mead, Bristol BS1 2NH 0117 926 6366				
Property	430.00	452.60	+3.40	
UK Equity	841.20	885.50	-0.80	
Gilt Edged	665.20	700.20	+0.80	
Interest Fund	431.70	454.40	+0.60	
Managed Fd	557.30	586.60	-0.80	
Intl Equity	671.20	706.50	-2.40	
North American	261.70	275.40	-0.30	
Far East	418.40	441.40	+0.20	
Intl Currency	259.90	273.50	-0.30	
NPI 48 Gracechurch Street, London EC3P 3HH 0171 623 4200				
Managed	580.30	610.90	-0.60	
UK Equity	781.80	[illegible]	+2.40	
Overseas Equity	527.10	555.40	-3.70	
American	507.60	534.30	-10.90	
Far East	563.00	593.40	-7.10	
Property	232.00	244.20	+1.00	
Fixed Interest	427.00	460.00	-2.40	
Indexed Gilt	253.40	266.70	-1.10	
Deposit	239.40	248.00	-0.60	
NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE SOCIETY - Ex NUAM Funds PO Box 140, Norwich NR1 1PP 01603 622200				
Managed Fund	1753.00	1845.30	-3.50	
Equity Fund	4054.90	4268.30	-8.30	
Property Fd	658.20	692.80	-0.90	
Fixed Int Fd	679.00	714.70	-0.50	
Deposit Fund	382.00	402.10	-0.30	
Intl Fund	281.40	296.20	-2.37	
OLD MUTUAL 2 Bartley Way, Hook, Hants RG27 9XA 01256 768888				
Equity Fund Acc	360.50	380.30	+0.20	
Fxd Interest Acc	273.10	288.10	-2.40	
International Acc	274.60	289.10	-1.80	
Managed Acc	249.70	263.90	-0.10	
Property Acc	213.40	225.40	-0.60	
Money Acc	167.20	176.40	-0.10	
Spec Mkt Acc	210.90	222.00	-1.80	
Japan Equity Acc	105.20	111.10	-0.10	
N Amer Acc	200.40	211.30	-6.20	
Pacific Acc	146.40	154.50	-0.60	
European Acc	234.60	247.50	-1.00	
PEARL ASSURANCE The Pearl Centre, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6FY, 01733 470 470				
Inv Prop Dist	141.40	148.90	+1.00	
Prop Acc (Gross)	340.10	358.00	+2.50	
Inv Equity	[illegible]	1582.50	-2.80	
Inv Managed	1007.60	1060.00	-3.70	
Ret Managed	1178.30	1240.40	-4.40	
For Provident Mutual see General Accident				
PRUDENTIAL Holborn Bars, London EC1N 2NH 0171 405 9222				
Managed	421.10	438.70	+1.90	
PRUDENTIAL INDIVIDUAL LIFE FDS 1 Stephen Street, London W1P 2AP 0171 548 3278				
Managed Fund	952.50	1002.70	-2.20	
Equity Fund	1905.30	2006.00	-2.90	
Intl Fund	732.30	770.90	-5.40	
Fixed Interest	639.30	673.00	-2.70	
Property Fund	497.80	524.00	-1.20	
Cash Fund	395.40	416.30	+0.50	
Pacific Basin	364.40	383.60	-1.80	
N American Fd	360.30	379.30	-7.40	
Euro Fund	350.20	368.70	-1.20	
Balanced Fund	188.90	198.90	-0.70	
Strategic Fund	203.40	214.10	-0.80	
ROYAL HERITAGE LIFE ASSURANCE Peterborough Business Park, Peterborough PE2 6GG, 01733 390000				
Mult Grow (45) 1	408.20			
-do- Acc	505.70	530.30		
Op Prop	525.90	553.50	-1.70	
Op Equity	1247.40	1313.00	-5.90	
Op High Yield	670.90	706.20	-7.00	
Op Managed	958.90	1009.30	-5.20	
Op Deposit	424.90	447.20	+0.40	
Japan Smllr	191.10	201.10	-11.10	
Managed Gth	345.60	363.70	+0.60	
Gilt	90.20	94.90		
British	465.70	490.20	-12.40	
Global Bond	123.60	130.00	-0.00	
Gold Share	94.30	99.20	+1.80	
Dollar Gilt	335.60	352.70		
Japan	336.30	353.80	-22.70	
UK Smlr Cos	537.30	565.50	+13.50	
Mngd Growth	568.50	598.40	+8.90	
ROYAL LIFE INSURANCE New Hall Place, Liverpool L69 3HS 0151 227 4422				
Royal Life Unit Linked				
Managed Fund	459.00	483.90	-2.90	
Equity Fund	679.40	715.30	-2.40	
Property Fund	[illegible]	369.30	-0.70	
International	546.30	574.90	-4.60	
Pacific Basin	275.50	289.90	-1.00	
United States	370.00	389.50	-2.50	
Gilt Fund	418.70	440.70	-3.90	
SAVE & PROSPER 16-22 Western Road, Romford, Essex RM1 3LB, 01708 766966				
Bal Inv Fund	89.60	93.80	-0.30	2.38
Deposit Fund (2)	410.00	433.90	+0.40	4.85
Gilt Fund	590.60	625.00	-4.50	8.42
Global Equity Fd	269.90	285.70	-1.00	
Property Fund (4)	121.20	128.30	...	7.28
AG Bond Fund	152.30	161.60	+0.30	
SCOTTISH AMICABLE 150 St Vincent Street, Glasgow 0141 248 2323				
Equity	742.90	782.10	-0.60	
Fixed Interest	411.00	432.70	-4.30	
Index-Linked	214.50	226.20	-1.30	
International	498.70	525.00	-0.80	
Property	322.60	339.60	+0.90	
Cash	[illegible]	282.60	+0.30	
Managed	550.20	579.20	-1.10	
Cap Guard Bd	144.50	152.20	-2.30	
90% Safeguard	92.20	...	+0.10	
100% Safeguard	96.50	...	+0.10	
SCOTTISH EQUITABLE 28 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 1YF 0131 556 9101				
Cash	197.00	207.450	+0.20	
Index-Linked	182.10	191.70	-0.10	
Fixed Interest	206.30	217.10	-1.50	
Mixed	310.90	327.10	-2.80	
UK Equity	308.00	324.20	-1.30	
International	289.20	304.50	-6.40	
American	348.60	367.00	-10.20	
Japan	197.60	207.90	-2.70	
European	329.40	347.20	-4.90	
Pacific	265.00	281.20	-6.70	
Technology	309.80	326.10	-12.50	
Pers Ret/Ccy	275.90	290.20	-2.80	
SCOTTISH LIFE INVESTMENTS 19 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 1YE 0131 225 2211				
Property	232.10	244.40	+0.00	
UK Equity	454.90	478.90	-0.20	
American	317.90	334.70	-8.50	
Pacific	347.50	365.40	-2.80	
European	580.30	610.90	-2.00	
Global Mgd	356.10	375.00	-0.20	
Fixed Interest	256.10	270.20	-1.70	
Index Linked	217.90	229.00	-1.30	...
Deposit	211.90	223.10	+0.20	...
Managed	344.50	362.70	-0.30	...
Worldwide	134.50	141.70	-0.40	...
Pen Worldwide	145.30	153.00	-0.50	...
SCOTTISH MUTUAL ASSURANCE 109 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5HN 0141 248 6321				
Fin Fund (9)	2028.50	2097.20	...	...
Safety Fund	269.80	284.10	+2.10	...
Growth Fund	279.80	294.60	+0.50	...
Opportunity Fd	278.90	293.60	+0.10	...
Cash Fund	188.20	198.20	+0.10	...
European Fund	430.80	453.50	-0.10	...
Gilts & Fxd Int	230.80	242.90	-2.50	...
Index-Linked Fd	199.20	209.70	-0.90	...
International Fd	314.60	331.20	-2.40	...
North American	305.70	321.80	-6.60	...
Property Fund	131.50	138.50	-1.00	...
UK Equity	311.60	328.00	+2.10	...
UK Smaller	321.80	338.80	+4.40	...
SCOTTISH PROVIDENT 6 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YA 0131 556 9181				
Mixed	328.10	345.50	-0.60	...
Equity	369.60	389.10	+0.30	...
International	290.60	306.20	-1.30	...
Property	243.40	256.30	+0.80	...
Fixed Interest	257.50	271.10	-1.00	...
Index Linked	200.10	210.70	-1.20	...
Cash	200.80	211.30	+0.20	...
Formerly Prolific				
Bal Gwth Mngd	964.00	1025.60	-2.30	...
Cash Fund	366.00	385.70	+0.40	...
Property Fund	317.30	334.40	+0.70	...
Equity Fund	1017.40	1082.40	-4.60	...
Fxd Interest Fund	535.90	564.80	-3.00	...
International	413.60	440.00	-1.70	...
High Income	910.20	968.40	-1.20	...
Far East	570.10	606.90	+5.40	...
North American	689.10	733.10	-8.50	...
Special Sits	879.40	935.60	-2.60	...
Technology	985.10	1048.00	-8.70	...
Extra Income Fd	494.00	525.60	-0.30	...
Gilt Fund	374.20	398.30	-0.50	...
European	178.60	190.00	-1.20	...
Adventurous Mg	241.10	254.10	-1.20	...
Secure Mgd	174.30	183.20	-0.30	...
Equity Inc Dist	139.50	147.00	+0.20	4.03
Managed Dist	124.20	130.80	-0.10	4.77
Henderson Investment Bonds				
UK Equity Fd	408.70	434.80	-0.30	...
North America	446.50	475.00	-4.60	...
Far East Fund	567.80	604.10	-5.10	...
Global Managed	938.00	993.70	+0.10	...
Deposit Fund	246.90	259.90	-1.00	...
Prime Residential	137.20	145.00		...
European Fund	324.30	345.00	-1.80	...
Fixed Interest	61.30	65.30	-0.60	...
SCOTTISH WIDOWS PO Box 902, Edinburgh EH16 5BU 0131 655 6000				
Inv Pol 1	[illegible]	1192.00	-4.10	...
Inv Pol 2	1078.30	1135.10	-4.20	...
Inv Pol 3	1019.70	1073.40	-4.40	...
Inv Cash	342.80	361.00	+0.10	...
Mixed Fund	541.40	570.00	-0.80	...
Equity Fund	694.60	731.30	+0.30	...
Property Fund	268.30	282.50	+1.70	...
International Fd	536.30	564.70	-4.70	...
Fixed Interest Fd	429.00	451.60	-3.10	...
Indexed Stock Fd	220.60	232.40	-1.20	...
Cash Fund	247.90	261.00	+0.10	...
SKANDIA LIFE Skandia House, Portland Terrace, Southampton SO9 7BX 01703 334411				
Managed Acc	461.10	485.30	-0.20	...
Equity Acc	585.50	616.30	+1.20	...
International Acc	366.00	385.20	-4.90	...
Property	238.90	251.40	+0.30	...
STANDARD LIFE ASSURANCE CO Standard Life House, 30 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH1 2DH 0131 225 2552				
Cash	291.00	306.40	+0.20	...
Equity	1308.50	1377.40	+7.50	...
European	195.50	205.80	+0.50	...
Far East	171.10	180.20	-0.70	...
Fixed Interest	[illegible]	479.30	+0.20	...
Index Linked	[illegible]	[illegible]	-0.10	...
International	662.30	697.20	-1.70	...
Managed	854.70	899.70	+2.80	...
Nth American	186.00	195.90	-1.90	...
Property	395.20	416.10	+0.30	...
Pensions				
Cash	465.50	490.00	+0.30	...
Equity	2009.10	2114.90	-13.60	...
European	252.50	265.80	-0.20	...
Far East	135.60	142.80	+0.60	...
Fixed Interest	[illegible]	685.20	-0.40	...
Index Linked	333.20	350.80	-0.30	...
International	989.80	[illegible]	-5.00	...
Managed	1266.50	1333.20	+4.10	...
Nth American	246.50	259.50	-2.90	...
Property	564.40	[illegible]	+0.90	...
Stock Exchange	288.70	300.80	+0.80	...
SUN ALLIANCE St Mark's Court, Horsham, Sussex 01403 232323				
Managed Fund	821.20	864.50	-2.90	...
Equity Fund	1141.50	1201.60	-1.70	...
Fixed Interest Fd	[illegible]	490.50	-1.30	...
Index-Linked Fd	[illegible]	174.00	-1.90	...
Property Fund	557.60	587.00	+3.10	...
International Fd	742.80	781.90	-7.50	...
N American Fd	369.90	389.40	-5.80	...
Far East Fund	243.60	256.50	-1.10	...
Deposit Fund	325.20	342.40	+0.20	...
Intnl Bd 1	£103.20	...	+0.00	...
Worldwide Bond	[illegible]	[illegible]	-1.80	...
European	225.00	236.60	+0.20	...
Phoenix Assurance				
Wealth Assured	830.70	874.60	-1.40	...
Ebor Phoenix Eq	580.70	620.60		...
Property Growth				
Property Fund 1	651.60	...	+3.40	...
-do- Acc 1	601.30	...	+3.10	...
Agricultural Fd 1	902.00	...	+0.80	...
-do- Acc 1	860.90	...	+0.60	...
Abbey Nat Fd 1	492.30	...	+1.50	...
Abbey Nat Acc 1	505.80	...	+1.60	...
Investment Fd 1	440.60	...	-1.20	...
Investment (A) 1	421.50	...	-1.10	...
Equity 1	1677.70	...	-2.30	...
Equity Acc 1	1598.50	...	-2.30	...
Money Fund 1	521.60	...	+0.50	...
-do- Acc 1	498.30	...	+0.90	...
Actuarial Fd 1	721.40	...	-2.30	...
Gilt-Edged Fd 1	438.80	...	-1.20	...
-do- Acc 1	438.80	...	-1.20	...
Retire Annuity 1	1358.80	...	+8.20	...
Immed Annuity 1	301.00			
Bldg Soc Life 1	246.90	...	-0.20	...
SUN LIFE OF CANADA Basingview, Basingstoke, Hants RG21 2DZ Dealing: 01256 841414				
Growth Acc 1	1825.40	...	+31.80	...
Managed Acc 1	1011.60	...	...	...
Equity Account 1	1514.60	...	...	...
Mngd Fund Acc	460.60	484.90	...	...
Equity Fund Acc	654.50	688.90	...	...
Prop Fund Acc	282.50	297.40	...	...
Fixed Int Fd Acc	355.00	373.70	...	...
Money Fund Acc	239.40	252.00	...	...
Indx-Lnk Scs Ac	225.40	237.30	...	...
Pers Pens Acc 1	2307.90	...	-32.70	...
Pens Mngd Acc	1072.60	1129.00	+10.00	...
Pens Guarantee	297.00	312.70	-1.00	...
Pens Equity	431.30	454.00	+11.40	...
Pens Property	326.60	343.80	+0.80	...
Pens Fixed Int	345.30	363.50	-3.70	...
Pens Intl	278.50	293.20	-7.20	...
Pens Money	263.10	277.00	+0.40	...
Pens Indx-Lnkd	221.50	233.10	+0.90	...
SUN LIFE UNIT St James Barton, Bristol BS99 7SL 0117 9426911				
Managed Acc	1057.50	1113.20	-3.60	...
Property Acc	399.10	420.20	-0.20	...
Equity Acc	1828.60	1924.90	-2.40	...
Fixed Int Acc	463.10	487.50	-4.00	...
Cash Acc	338.70	356.60	+0.30	...
Amer Equity Acc	497.90	524.20	-7.60	...
Japan Acc	240.70	253.40	-0.30	...
Pacific Acc	391.30	411.90	-1.30	...
Far Eastern Acc	813.30	856.20	-6.10	...
International Acc	647.90	682.00	-2.10	...
Distribution Fund	298.30	314.10	-0.90	5.87
European	218.50	230.10	-0.60	...
Deffrd Dist	196.70	207.10	-0.60	...
TSB LIFE LTD Charlton Place, Andover, Hants, SP10 1RE 01264 345678				
Managed Fund	337.40	355.20	-0.80	...
Property Fund	232.20	244.50	-0.10	...
Fixed Interest Fd	250.70	264.00	-1.80	...
Money Fund	217.50	229.00	-0.10	...
Equity Fund	448.00	471.60	-0.90	...
WINDSOR LIFE Windsor House, Telford, Shropshire 01952 292929				
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Equity Fund	785.80	827.20	...	...
Fixed Interest	317.90	334.60	...	...
Property Fund	381.60	401.60	...	...
Gresham Framlington				
American & Genl	705.20	743.10	...	...
Income	909.90	958.80	...	...
International Gth	708.20	746.30	...	...
Capital Fund	780.60	822.00	...	...
Recovery Fund	615.70	648.80	...	...
Japan & General	222.40	234.40	...	...
Formerly AEtna				
Life Funds				
Squirrel	19.55	20.58	...	...
Bear	23.17	24.39	...	...
Owl	26.00	27.37	...	...
Bull	21.58	22.72	...	...
Stag	22.96	24.17	...	...
Gilt Edged	20.97	22.07	...	...
Deposit	16.94	17.83	...	...
Pensions				
Squirrel	27.35	28.79	...	...
Bear	33.32	35.07	...	...
Owl	36.97	38.92	...	...
Bull	28.92	30.44	...	...
Stag	30.58	32.19	...	...
Gilt Edged	27.24	28.67	...	...
Deposit	22.55	23.74	...	...
Pre 1982 Series				
Spray Fund	709.24		...	...
1982 Series				
UK Equity	434.84	457.73	...	...
N Amer Equity	357.50	376.32	...	...
Far East Equity	393.58	414.29	...	...
Fixed	333.57	351.13	...	...
Cash Deposit	221.73	233.40	...	...
Property	162.85	171.42	...	...
Special Opp	442.74	466.04	...	...
Managed	373.20	392.84	...	...
Index-Linked Fd	208.97	219.97	...	...
Formerly Crown				
Life Mangd Acc	715.00	750.30	...	...
Life Fxd Int Acc	423.00	445.20	...	...
Life Equity Acc	£10.57	£11.09	...	...
Life Money Acc	323.60	340.60	...	...
Life Inv Tst Acc	935.70	981.80	...	...
Life Intl Acc	540.80	566.90	...	...
Life High Inc Acc	984.30	£10.33	...	...
Life Property Acc	260.00	273.60	...	...
Brevin Equity	862.80	908.20	...	...

هكذا من الأصل

Our Economics Editor begins a four-part series on the economy

The number crunchers

ECONOMICS EXPLAINED 1 STATISTICS

Winston Churchill set up Britain's statistical service in 1941, recognising, in the dark days of the Second World War, that accurate readings of the economy were needed if he was to harness its full power for the war effort. The strategic importance of this initiative meant that the number crunchers were set to work in the War Cabinet building in Horseguards Road. Today, the grandly titled Office for National Statistics (ONS), as well as the Bank of England, publishes an impressive array of figures. Below is a guide to some of the main statistics which are the cornerstone of key economic policy decisions.

■ INFLATION: This is particularly important since the Government introduced an inflation target as a new policy anchor in the chaos after sterling left Europe's exchange-rate mechanism. There are two widely used measures of inflation. The retail prices index, commonly called headline inflation, is used to uprate pensions and many social security benefits and is also a guide to wage negotiators around Britain. The RPI measures the price of a basket of goods compiled by people who every month tour shops and supermarkets and scour trade publications for changes of prices for, say, holidays or insurance policies. The second inflation measure is the RPI excluding mortgage interest payments or RPIX. This is called underlying or core inflation and the Government aims to get it to 2.5 per cent or less.

■ PRODUCER PRICES: These include input prices which are the cost to British companies of raw materials and parts, many of them imported from abroad, and output prices. The latter are often called factory gate prices and are the prices of finished goods. Producer prices are a useful guide to future price trends on Britain's high streets. As a rule, lower input prices will allow firms to sell finished manufactures more cheaply, in turn giving retailers the option of passing on bargains to their customers.

■ INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION: These figures give a monthly snapshot of what Britain's industrial — as opposed to services — sector, produces. The ONS publishes figures for manufacturing output and industrial production as a whole. The latter includes what Britain's North Sea oil and gas sector produces as well as the output of the main utilities — gas, electricity and water.

■ GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT: GDP is an overall measure of growth, the single most important indication of Britain's economic performance. Some other countries use GNP or gross national product which adds the returns from British investment abroad to GDP.

It is difficult to measure the size of the economy accurately. GDP figures published every month effectively average out the three main ways of doing it: measuring the output of goods and services produced, measuring the total income from all this production and measuring spending on the goods and services. GDP takes into account everything from the output of industry and services, agriculture and construction to exports, stocks held by British companies and investment. Also totted up are consumer spending, incomes and government contribution to the economy.

■ BALANCE OF PAYMENTS: This measures our visible and invisible trading account with the rest of the world. Visible trade includes imports and exports of manufactured goods, fuels, food and raw materials. These figures used to be compiled from customs reports on goods entering or leaving the country. But, in 1992, internal EU frontiers were dismantled and Britain adopted the European Intrastat system that collects trade data direct from companies.

Invisible trade includes services such as banking and insurance as well as the interest, profits and dividends earned by British firms overseas and foreign firms doing business in Britain. It also includes transfers — largely Britain's contributions to the EU budget. The combination of visible and invisible trade makes up the current account of the balance of payments. In recent years, Britain has typically run a deficit on visible trade but a surplus on invisibles.

■ PSBR: This stands for the public sector borrowing requirement, a rather ugly term which measures the health or otherwise of Britain's public finances. The PSBR is the difference between two huge amounts — public spending and public revenue. A negative PSBR in a particular month means a repayment of borrowing.

The PSBR comes in for a lot of criticism partly because it counts proceeds from privatisations such as the sale of British Gas or, more recently, Ministry of Defence married quarters, as negative spending. This wheeze is not strictly allowed in the Maastricht treaty's definition of a government budget deficit.

■ MONEY SUPPLY: This was (and remains) the key economic statistic for monetarists who believe that the rate of growth of the stock of money more or less directly determines the rate of inflation. In the 1980s, when monetarism dominated the economic debate, there was a Spaghetti Junction of money supply measures called M0, M1, £M3, M4 and M5. Targeting one or the other went in and out of fashion as the Government attempted to control inflation.

Nowadays, the Government no longer sets targets for money supply, whose relationship with inflation is now deemed too uncertain. Instead it sets monitoring ranges for M0 or narrow money and M4, also called broad money. M0 measures notes and coins in circulation in the economy and notes and coins held in banks. M4 includes such items as the PSBR, purchases of public sector debt such as government bonds and Treasury bills by the private sector and bank and building society lending.

JANET BUSH

Winston Churchill saw the need for accurate statistics to plan the war effort

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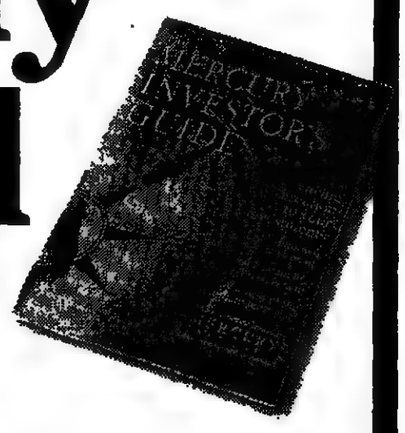

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Francome's appeal built on knowledge, communication and humour

Channel 4 wins vote of confidence

Richard Evans on a poll whose findings question the BBC's coverage of racing

Three out of four armchair viewers prefer the racing coverage provided by Channel 4 to that of BBC television — and John Francome, the former champion jumps jockey, is by far the most popular presenter.

The low esteem in which the BBC coverage is held by dedicated racing supporters follows the disclosure in *The Times* last month concerning the groundswell of discontent among racecourses where the corporation's cameras operate.

The concern of racecourses — including Ascot, Goodwood, Newbury and Haydock — led *The Sporting Life* to conduct a telephone poll of readers which showed a 76-24 per cent bias in favour of Channel 4. Today, the results of a far more detailed postal survey among the newspaper's readers not only confirms that split, but also highlights viewers' likes and dislikes about television racing personalities.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: CHARMING GALE (3.05 Musselburgh)
Next best: Shining Edge (2.05 Musselburgh)
Richard Evans found a good-priced nap at Southwell yesterday with Domino Flyer (6-1)

Of the 974 respondents — a particularly high return — 76.5 per cent said they preferred Channel 4, while 20 per cent voted for the BBC and 2.5 per cent indicated no preference.

If that was not sufficiently bad news for the BBC, the breakdown of votes for presenters underlines the dissatisfaction among viewers. Readers were asked to rate 19 presenters and commentators used by Channel 4 and BBC on a scale of nought to nine. The bottom four slots are filled by BBC men, while Julian Wilson, the BBC's anchorman, languishes in joint thirteenth.

Again, those views echo the complaints of racecourses covered by the BBC, who were highly critical of Peter Scuadmore and Jimmy Lindley, and said Wilson's sombre manner was not viewer-friendly.

Only three BBC people finished in the top ten: J. A. McGrath, the outstanding Australian-born commentator who is widely expected to succeed Peter O'Sullevan when he retires later this year, came joint third. O'Sullevan is in sixth place and recorded more maximum votes of nine than everyone except Francome, which arguably still makes him the BBC's trump card. Jonathan Powell finished in ninth.

Francome (left), from the Channel 4 team, topped the readers' poll, while Wilson, BBC's anchorman, was only thirteenth

Francome's appeal is his widespread knowledge of racing, an effortless style of communicating to viewers and a humorous light touch. His runaway success in the readers' survey came after he scored a maximum nine with 343 of the 974 voters. A further 242 people gave him eight, while 147 allocated him seven. Only eight people rated him at nought.

> 'McCririck was, not surprisingly, either much liked or disliked'

John McCririck, Channel 4's larger-than-life betting ring pundit, was either much liked or disliked, which is hardly surprising given his colourful and controversial style. Although he finished joint thirteenth with fellow Old Harrovian Wilson, 236 readers scored him at eight or nine, but 147 readers gave him no points — the worst record of all.

The reasons given for Channel 4's appeal were wide and uninterrupted coverage, pre- and post-race information, interesting content "with excitement and humour", well-informed professionalism and Francome. Criticism concentrated on McCririck, too many presenters and poor commentaries, commercial breaks, trivial chatter or behaviour and Derek Thompson.

The plus points for the BBC were its professional, dignified and ungimmicky approach, O'Sullevan's informative and clear commentary, J. A. McGrath and camera work. The least liked aspects were limited and rushed pre-race and post-race information, interruptions for other sports, the commentators' personalities and habits, and "stuffy and boring presentation".

Andrew Franklin, producer of Channel 4 Racing, was understandably thrilled by the outcome of the questionnaire. "It amounts to an overwhelming vote of confidence — more than we could ever have hoped for — and is vindication that we have put the massive amount of air time devoted to the sport to the best possible use," he said yesterday.

Jonathan Martin, head of BBC Sport, was unavailable for comment last night.

☐ Lord Kimball, who was chairman of the British Greyhound Racing Fund, from its inception in 1993 to March last year, is also on the shortlist of candidates for the Tote chairmanship. He helped to raise £2.5 million from the bookmakers during his term of office.

HOW THE TELEVISION RACES FIT

	% of total votes achieved	Ranking
John Francome (C4)	83%	1
Alastair Down (C4)	75%	2
Simon Holt (C4)	74%	3
J.A. McGrath (BBC)	74%	3
Jim McGrath (C4)	74%	3
Peter O'Sullevan (BBC)	73%	6
Graham Goode (C4)	72%	7
Brough Scott (C4)	68%	8
Jonathan Powell (BBC)	60%	9
Lesley Graham (C4)	58%	10
Lord Oaksey (C4)	58%	10
Clare Balding (BBC)	57%	12
John McCririck (C4)	56%	13
Julian Wilson (BBC)	56%	13
Derek Thompson (C4)	55%	15
Richard Pitman (BBC)	54%	16
Peter Scudamore (BBC)	49%	17
Jimmy Lindley (BBC)	47%	18
Graham Rock (BBC)	44%	19

Superbelle looks safe option at snowy Lingfield

By Julian Muscat

TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

REGULAR viewers of Channel 4 Racing could be forgiven for blinking with disbelief on the opening credits from Lingfield Park today. No, it is not a replacement movie featuring Scott of the Antarctic; they will actually be racing between the strips of frozen landscape.

This marks the first time all-weather racing has the televised stage to itself, and the broadcasters propose to highlight its intricacies during *The Morning Line*. You will hear of the value of a good start, the frantic gallop and the difference between Lingfield's Equitrack surface to those at Southwell and Wolverhampton. If you plan to sift the form, have the Asprin handy. You may feel like the occasional tourist circling the M25.

Certainly the field sizes will startle those accustomed to races of four and five runners. Two heats have been divided to produce an eight-race card in which each-way betting down to third place is available throughout. Disciples of the code are few and far between. It may be courting ridicule to meddle with their domain, but we proceed in the belief that you can sometimes know too much when planning your bets.

1.45: Steamroller Stanly romped home at this venue in November. He is one for the shortlist but may be anchored by top weight. Glow Forum, whose all-weather record is admirable, has a chance but preference is for **Tart**. This filly shaped well on her all-weather debut and can reverse her threequarter-length defeat by Nikitas Star on 2lb better terms. General Haven runs well around here but appears one-paced.

2.15: **Sharp Imp** looks the call after his fine second here on Thursday. He has yet to finish out of the first four in eight outings at sprint trips here and looks attractive against weak opposition. Although Mystery Matthias makes some appeal, she remains a maiden after 22 outings. She is 3lb better off with Halbert for a narrow defeat last month, when Samsolom and Tachycardia finished further adrift. Barbason seems best at longer trips while Mister Raider is harshly penalised for his recent victory.

2.45: After failing to figure at Wolverhampton last month, **Countless Times** shaped with promise on this course more recently. He met trouble in running and looks poised to open his account. Nightingale Song showed speed on turf but lacks experience on this surface. Calchou and Tear White are both headstrong but Imperial Garden hails from an in-form stable.

3.15: Whatever the outcome, this gives Tirol's Treasure the chance to improve a dismal career record. The filly has finished last on each of her four outings to date, most recently when beaten more than 56 lengths at this venue. Around Fore Alliss and Lochlass, respectively second and third in that race, have place prospects

Jarvis: runs Superbelle

but **Superbelle** is the safest option. Expensively beaten at Wolverhampton three weeks ago, the filly should appreciate the extra two furlongs on this faster surface. Effervescence, one place behind her on that occasion, has won three times since.

3.45: Step On Degas tries this trip for the first time after performing consistently in sprints. However, he may be in the handicapper's grip. Mellors has reasonable form on turf but may lack a fitness edge. Jo Maximus comes from an in-form stable but **Bargash** is selected after an encouraging start on this surface last month. He finished third after making late headway.

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RACING NEXT WEEK

MONDAY: Folkestone (first race, 12.30), Southwell (AW, 1.15)
TUESDAY: Lingfield Park (AW, 1.00), Leicester (1.15)
WEDNESDAY: Kelso (1.10), Plumpton (1.20), Wolverhampton (AW, 1.00)
THURSDAY: Lingfield Park (AW 1.00), Wetherby (12.50), Wincanton (1.10)
FRIDAY: Ascot (BBC, 1.00), Musselburgh (1.10), Southwell (AW, 1.20)
SATURDAY: Ascot (BBC, 1.10), Lingfield Park (AW, 12.50), Newcastle (12.35), Warwick (C4, 12.25)
Flat meetings in bold

LINGFIELD PARK

THUNDERER
12.15 Invocation
12.45 Hawaii Storm
1.15 Slip Jig
1.45 General Haven
2.15 Mister Raider
2.45 Calchou
3.15 SUPERBELLE (nap)
3.45 Mellors

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 1.15 SLIP JIG.

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 12.15 Shashi, 1.45 Tart, 3.15 SUPERBELLE (nap).

GUIDE TO OUR RACECARD

103 (12) 0-0432 GOOD TIMES 74 (CD,BF,F,G,S) (Mrs D Peterson) B Hall 9-10-0 . B West (4) 88

Racecard number. Draw in brackets. Six-figure form 1F — fell. P — pulled up. U — unseated rider. B — brought down. S — slipped up. R — refused. D — disqualified. Horse's name. Days since last outing. J if jumps. F if flat. (B — blinkers. V — visor. H — hood. E — Eyeshield. C — course winner. D — distance winner. CD — course and distance winner. BF — beaten favourite in latest race). Going on which horse has won (F — firm, good to firm, hard. G — good. S — soft, good to soft, heavy). Owner in brackets. Trainer. Age and weight. Rider plus any allowance. The Times Private Handicapper's rating.

GOING: STANDARD — SIS
TOTE JACKPOT MEETING — DRAW: 5F-7F, LOW NUMBERS BEST

12.15 LADBROKE ON COURSE BETTING SHOP HANDICAP
(Div I £2,101: 6f) (11 runners)

101 (7) 000162- SHASHI 16 (D,F,G) (Mrs A Sanders) Pat Mitchell 5-10-0 R Lappin 92
102 (5) 043550- INVOCATION 30 (CD,F,G) (P Hannan) A Moore 10-9-13 A Clark 98
103 (8) 142020- MILETRIAN REFURB 7 (D,G,S) (Metran Pkt) M Channon 4-9-11 Candy Morris 92
104 (6) 0003S0- OUR SHADEE 15 (V,CD,F,G) (K Kerr) K Ivory 7-9-8 C Scally 89
105 (2) 58002-3 GI LA HIGH 3 (C,BF,G) (Ladywood Racing Club) M Meade 4-9-7 D Sweeney (5) 91
106 (3) 320002- HOH MAJESTIC 35 (V,F,G) (Mrs R Hagan) R Thomson 4-9-6 J Weaver 91
107 (11) 000070- COLSTON-C 4 (D,F) (P Evans) P Evans 5-9-5 – 93
108 (10) 150025- ALJAZ 7 (B,G,S) (Beckham And Boyle Part'ship) Miss G Kelleway 7-9-3 S Sanders 91
109 (3) 00/0060- NORLING 125 (D,F,G) (S Pedersen) K Cunningham-Brown 7-9-0 C Munday 90
110 (4) 000- VIENNESE DANCER 75 (Super Trouper Part'ship) R Williams 4-7-13 M Baird (3) –
111 (1) 500000- INDIAN WOLF 172 (Mrs T Devonshire) B Llewellyn 4-7-10 G Bardwell –

Long handicap: Indian Wolf 7-6
BETTING: 7-2 Shashi, 4-1 GI La High, 5-1 Aljaz, 6-1 Colston-C, 8-1 Miletrian Refurb, Invocation, 10-1 others.
1996: MYJINKA 6-8-12 P McCabe (7-2-1) D Donoghue 12 ran

FORM FOCUS

SHASHI 11 2nd of 13 to Marjove Rose in claimer at Wolverhampton (AW, 6f). INVOCATION 5th 7lb of 13 to Shahi in handicap here (AW, 7f). MILETRIAN REFURB 1¾l 2nd of 10 to Observe in claimer at Bath (5f, good) on penultimate start. GI LA HIGH about 14l 3rd of 10 to Ballad Lady in handicap at Southwell (AW, 6f). COLSTON-C best effort about ½l 3rd of 12 to Halbert in handicap over course and distance (AW) on penultimate start. ALJAZ best effort ¾l 2nd of 12 to Hayles Star in handicap at Wolverhampton (AW, 5f).
Selection: COLSTON-C

12.45 LADBROKE ALL-WEATHER TROPHY HANDICAP
(Qualifier: Div I, £2,427, 7f) (9 runners)

201 (2) 660000- KI CHI SAGA 16J (D,G,S) (S Knight) M Madgwick 5-10-0 A Clark 97
202 (6) 051000- DARYABAD 49 (D,F,G) (J & M Racing Part'ship) T Naughton 5-9-9 J D Smith (3) 98
203 (3) 110011- APOLLO RED 24 (CD,F,G,S) (A Moore) J Moore 5-9-5 Candy Morris 94
204 (5) 00/0031- ROYAL CARLTON 9 (C,G) (Mrs M Doyle) G Moore 5-9-4 S Whitworth 90
205 (4) 000022- NEVER THINK TWICE 15 (H Kerr) K Ivory 4-9-2 R Adams 89
206 (9) 600052- DARK MENACE 24 (B,F) (Queen Street & Co Ltd) K Wheeler 5-9-5 A Daly (5) 92
207 (1) 000060- ZAMALEK 74J (E,F) (Miss J Marshall) R Hollinshead 5-8-6 S Drowne 90
208 (3) 506343- HAWAII STORM 24 (CD,G,S) (C Capon) D Haydn Jones 9-8-4 M Baird (3) 98
209 (7) 6540/02- GOLDEN SILVER 156 (D) (Jones Lane) J Moore 4-8-1 K Aston (7) 97

BETTING: 7-4 Royal Carlton, 5-2 Apollo Red, 6-1 Never Think Twice, 7-1 Hawaii Storm, 8-1 Dark Menace, 10-1 Daryabad, 14-1 Golden Silver, 16-1 others.
1996: RAKIS 6-9-12 R Cochrane (11-2) D Morgan 15 ran

FORM FOCUS

DARYABAD 11l 9th of 13 to Dyke Valentine in handicap at Wolverhampton (AW, 1m 100yds). APOLLO RED beat Star Talent 2½l in 12-runner handicap over course and distance (AW). ROYAL CARLTON best Passage Creek by ¾l in 9-runner maiden here (AW, 1m). NEVER THINK TWICE 4l 2nd of 15 to Speedy Classic in handicap over course and distance (AW). DARK MENACE short-head 2nd of 12 to Greatest in handicap over course and distance (AW) with HAWAII STORM (13lb better off) about 3l 3rd. GOLDEN SILVER 3l 2nd of 12 to Orbaan in claimer at Salisbury (6f, good to firm).
Selection: APOLLO RED

1.15 LADBROKE APPRENTICES CLAIMING STAKES
(£2,344: 1m 4f) (10 runners)

301 (6) 4/00000- IL TRASTEVERE 7 (B) (J Hanna) Miss G Kelleway 5-9-12 Angela Gallimore 99
302 (10) 00063-0 OLD HUSH WING 2 (V) (Grag Metals Ltd) P Haslam 4-9-8 P Goode (7) 77
303 (4) 000322- SLIP JIG 5 (S) (J Horgan) R Hannon 4-9-6 B Gallagher (7) 88
304 (1) 4600/00- MEMORY'S MUSIC 31J (W Roles) M Madgwick 5-9-6 C Carver (3) –
305 (7) 601060- CAPTAIN MARMALADE 236 (C,G) (Mrs A Thorn) D Thom 6-9-3 Emily Joyce (5) 80
306 (3) 0/60002- SOLDIER COVE 39 (S) (Ladywood Racing Club) M Meade 7-9-0 T Field (3) 91
307 (2) 065400- ONE IN THE EYE 51 (T Anthony) J Poulton 4-8-13 R Cody-Boutcher (5) 95
308 (3) 005200- HAUTE CUISINE 23J (Pains House Gourmets) B Williams 4-8-10 C Webb 88
309 (6) 0- STONECUTTER 7 (V) (Miss S Debortolis) M Channon 4-8-10 B Hanson (5) –
310 (9) 0/06- AL HAAL 4 (J Joseph) R O'Sullivan 6-8-8 D Denby 84

BETTING: 5-4 Slip Jig, 5-1 Soldier Cove, 6-1 Stonecutter, 8-1 Il Trastevere, 10-1 Captain Marmalade, Haute Cuisine, 12-1 others.
1996: TART 5-9-0 J Dennis 10-11 fav (M Brittain) 10 ran

FORM FOCUS

IL TRASTEVERE 2½l 8th of 12 to Greenspan in claimer at Wolverhampton (AW, 1m 1f 79yds). SLIP JIG 2l 2nd of 11 to Barossa Valley in handicap here (AW, 1m 3f). SOLDIER COVE 8l 2nd of 14 to Angel Face in seller here (AW, 1m 2f). ONE IN THE EYE 12l 7th of 8 to Argaro in handicap here (AW, 1m 2f). HAUTE CUISINE 18l 10th of 20 to Petroldin in selling handicap at Yarmouth (1m 3f 101yds, good to firm). AL HAAL 7¾l 5th of 8 to Rasayel in handicap here (AW, 1m 5f).
Selection: AL HAAL

1.45 LADBROKE HANDICAP (£3,371: 1m 4f) (10 runners) C4

401 (2) 463501- STEAMROLLER STANLY 51 (CD,F,G) (R Cyzer) C Cyzer 4-9-12 G Carter 98
402 (5) 525401- NIKITA'S STAR 35 (D,F,G) (Nikita's Partners) D Murray Smith 4-9-9 Dean O'Neill 93
403 (9) 03/0000- OUT ON A PROMISE 22J (F,G) (P Green) N Walker 5-9-7 J Stack 92
404 (3) 12020/0- A MILLION WATTS 24 (F,G) (J Constable) G McCourt 6-9-6 A Clark –
405 (4) 215160- GLOW FORUM 28 (C,D,F,G,S) (A Smith) L Montague Hall 6-9-6 W Ryan 92
406 (6) 233312- TART (Wroughton House Partnership) J Pearce 4-9-4 M Wigham 93
407 (8) 144022- GENERAL HAVEN 22 (C,G) (A Callard) T Naughton 4-9-2 J Weaver 88
408 (7) 223/013- NO SPEECHES 283 (CD,G) (Top Class Racing) S Dow 6-9-0 A Daly (5) 92
409 (10) 090010- SET THE FASHION 21 (C,F,G,S) (R Mathews) D Wilkins 8-8-12 D Harrison 90
410 (1) 040400- BAYRAK 14J (D,G,S) (Giovanni Racing Group) P Kelleway 7-8-3 G Bardwell 92

BETTING: 3-1 Steamroller Stanly, 7-2 Tart, 5-1 General Haven, 11-2 Glow Forum, 7-1 Nikitas Star, 10-1 No Speeches, Out On A Promise, 12-1 others.
1996: BALLYNAKELLY 4-7-13 T Ackley (100-30) R Akehurst 10 ran

FORM FOCUS

STEAMROLLER STANLY beat Polar Champ 3½l in 9-runner conditions race over course and distance (AW). NIKITA'S STAR beat TART (2lb better off) ½l in 7-runner handicap at Wolverhampton (AW, 1m 4f). GLOW FORUM 11l 7th of 12 to Prince Danzig in handicap at Wolverhampton (AW, 1m 4f). TART beat Ballpoint neck in 10-runner claimer at Yarmouth (1m 3f 101yds, good). GENERAL HAVEN 2l 2nd of 14 to Mulgrave in handicap here (AW, 1m 5f). NO SPEECHES 4½l 3rd of 6 to Errant in conditions race here (AW, 1m 2f).
Selection: NIKITA'S STAR

2.15 LADBROKE ON COURSE BETTING SHOP HANDICAP C4
(Div II: £2,101: 6f) (11 runners)

501 (10) 03003-2 SHARP IMP 2 (B,CD,F,G) (Mrs C Tomermann) R Flower 7-10-0 Dane O'Neill 94
502 (4) 301001- MISTER RAIDER 4 (B,CD,G) (Raiders Part'ship) E Wheeler 5-9-12 (7ex) A Daly (5) 89
503 (7) 053443- BARBASON 15 (C,G) (F Hill) A Moore 5-9-10 Candy Morris 90
504 (6) 605042- MYSTERY MATTHIAS 30 (V) (Mrs J Laycock) Miss B Sanders 4-9-1 Jo Hunnam (7) 92
505 (8) 000640- SAMSOLOM 24 (CD,F,G) (C Hammond) P Howling 9-9-0 A Clark 94
506 (2) 005001- HALBERT 30 (V,CD,F,G) (B Jenkins) P Burgoyne 8-9-0 G Faulkner (5) 91
507 (11) 060000- THICK AS THIEVES 54 (D,F,G) (R Thompson) R Thompson 5-8-11 C Teague (3) 89
508 (9) 040040- SUPERLAO 121 (F,G) (J Bridger) J Bridger 5-8-10 – 90
509 (3) 40040-0 TACHYCARDIA 2 (D,F,G) (C Lane) R O'Sullivan 5-8-7 S Sanders 91
510 (5) 0/04000- ALLSTARS DANCER 119 (T Naughton) T Naughton 4-8-6 Rachael Moody (7) 83
511 (1) 520000- GITO DEBT 50 (Mrs J Drucet) J Pavitt 4-8-0 G Bardwell –

BETTING: 9-4 Mister Raider, 5-2 Sharp Imp, 5-1 Mystery Matthias, 6-1 Barbason, 8-1 Halbert, 10-1 Samsolom, 12-1 others.
1996: NO CORRESPONDING DIVISION

FORM FOCUS

SHARP IMP 1¾l 2nd of 9 to Ultra Beat in handicap over course and distance (AW) with TACHYCARDIA 9¾l 8th. MISTER RAIDER beat Sibell 4½l in 10-runner handicap here (AW, 5f). BARBASON 4½l 3rd of 15 to Speedy Classic in handicap here (AW, 7f). HALBERT beat MYSTERY MATTHIAS (2lb better off) ½l in 12-runner handicap over course and distance (AW) with SAMSOLOM (10lb better off) head and 1½l 4th and TACHYCARDIA (7lb better off) 6l 7th. THICK AS THIEVES 11l 10th of 12 to Lady Croker in conditions race at Wolverhampton (AW, 7f). ALLSTARS DANCER 8l 14th of 24 to Present a Comet in maiden handicap at Thirsk (5f, good to firm).
Selection: MISTER RAIDER

☐ The BBC is planning to increase its coverage from Leopardstown next Saturday if the Ascot meeting is called off. *Grandstand* will include coverage of the Fitzpatrick Hotel Group Novices' Chase and the Pierse Leopardstown Handicap Chase as well as the Ladbroke Handicap Hurdle.

2.45 LADBROKE TELEBETTING HANDICAP C4
(3-Y-O: £3,323: 5f) (8 runners)

601 (6) 244133- NIGHTINGALE SONG 107 (G) (S Bayless) M Meade 9-7 D Sweeney (5) 91
602 (8) 350154- HEAVENLY MISS 4 (CD,F,G) (T Mitchell) J Bridger 9-5 S Sanders 88
603 (7) 265650- TEAR WHITE 22 (B,D,F) (A Lawson & Co Ltd) T Mills 9-0 S Sanders 86
604 (5) 010602- IMPERIAL GARDEN 58 (D,G) (D Rutledge) P Haslam 9-0 S Drowne 91
605 (3) 333520- ENCHANTICA 36 (Mrs J Berry) J Berry 8-9 F Fossey (5) 89
606 (1) 035160- CALCHOU 32 (D,G) (W Dobson) C Fairhurst 8-9 R Lappin 88
607 (4) 600- KRYSTAL DAVEY 8 (The Oakfield Nurseries Partnership) T Barron 8-7 D Harrison 88
608 (2) 006032- COUNTLESS TIMES 4 (The Pit Way Racing Partnership) W Muir 8-7 A Clark 92

BETTING: 3-1 Enchantica, 7-2 Nightingale Song, 4-1 Countless Times, 5-1 Imperial Garden, 7-1 others.
1996: KRYSTAL MAX 9-3 Kimberley Hart (11-8 fav) T Barron 4 ran

FORM FOCUS

NIGHTINGALE SONG 3l 3rd of 15 to Little Rise in seller at Ayr (5f, good to firm). HEAVENLY MISS 6¾l 4th of 6 to Just Lost in nursery here (AW, 6f). TEAR WHITE 14l 10th of 12 to Xiouzhou Lad in nursery here (AW, 6f) with HEAVENLY MISS (10lb worse off) 9l 12th. IMPERIAL GARDEN neck 2nd of 11 to Fearless Cavalier in selling nursery at Musselburgh (5f, good to soft) with ENCHANTICA (1lb better off) head 3rd. ENCHANTICA ½l 2nd of 10 to Sparkling Edge in seller at Wolverhampton (AW, 5f) on penultimate start. CALCHOU best recent effort beat Red Test 2½l in 9-runner auction maiden at Southwell (AW, 5f). KRYSTAL DAVEY 1¾l 7th of 9 to Jay-Cee-Tee in auction maiden at Southwell (AW, 6f). COUNTLESS TIMES 4l 2nd of 6 to Never Golf Lover in auction maiden over course and distance (AW).
Selection: COUNTLESS TIMES

3.15 LADBROKE MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES C4
(3-Y-O: £2,804: 1m 2f) (12 runners)

1 (5) 550X- AROUND FORE ALLISS 15 (J Humphreys (Turf Accountants)) T Mills 9-0 W Ryan 89
2 (6) 00- FOXFORD LAD 13 (Mrs A Brown) T Jones 9-0 A Daly (5) –
3 (12) 4- FRENCH KISS 7 (T Cunningham) M Channon 9-0 Candy Morris –
4 (10) 0- LEG BEFORUM 187 (A Smith) L Montague Hall 9-0 G Carter –
5 (3) 3400- LOVE ME DO 75 (M Doyle) M Johnston 9-0 J Weaver 89
6 (11) 05- MOGUL 24 (The Silver and Blue Horse Racing Club) M Graham 9-0 Dane O'Neill 74
7 (1) 6500- MY LEGAL EAGLE 73 (G Frayes) J Hills 9-0 A Clark –
8 (4) 500060- ALMERJAM 39 (B) (D Powell) J White 8-9 S Drowne 76
9 (2) 00- BUZZBY BABE 24 (P Carter) A Foster 8-9 T Sprake 74
10 (8) 60353- LOCHLASS 15 (M Johnson) S Woods 8-9 G Webb (7) 87
11 (7) 3223- SUPERBELLE 21 (M Yang) M Jarvis 8-9 S Sanders 88
12 (9) 6000- TIROL'S TREASURE 15 (K Ivory) K Ivory 8-9 C Scally –

BETTING: 5-2 Superbelle, 7-2 Love Me Do, 9-2 Lochlass, 5-1 Around Fore Alliss, 7-1 French Kiss, 8-1 My Legal Eagle, 10-1 others.
1996: POSEN GOLD 8-9 R Cochrane (13-8) P Kelleway 6 ran

FORM FOCUS

AROUND FOR ALLISS 1l 2nd of 10 to Feather Bed in maiden here (AW, 1m) with LOCHLASS 9l 3rd. FOXFORD LAD 22l 7th of 10 to Zimbi in maiden here (AW, 1m) with TIROL'S TREASURE 34l 10th. FRENCH KISS 10¾l 4th of 8 to Romance in auction maiden at Wolverhampton (AW, 7f). MOGUL 13l 5th of 8 to Milroy in auction maiden here (AW, 7f) with BUZZBY BABE 3l 7th. LOCHLASS 5¼l 5th of 10 to Mersey Beat in auction maiden over course and distance (AW) with ALMERJAM 12¾l 8th. SUPERBELLE head and 2½l 3rd of 12 to No More Pressure in maiden at Wolverhampton (AW, 1m 100yds).
Selection: SUPERBELLE (nap)

3.45 LADBROKE ALL-WEATHER TROPHY HANDICAP C4
(Qualifier: Div II: £2,401: 7f) (8 runners)

1 (1) 010643- SEA DANZIG 16 (CD,G) (P Cook) J Bridger 4-9-10 S Sanders 93
2 (5) 020252- STEP ON DEGAS 15 (F) (Degas Part'ship) M Fetherston-Godley 4-9-8 D Griffiths (5) 92
3 (8) 500160- JO MAXIMUS 15 (D,F,G) (J & S Kelly) S Dow 5-9-7 A Daly (5) 88
4 (2) 425404- FORT KNOX 15 (B,CD,F,G) (Miss C Markowski) R Flower 6-9-5 Dane O'Neill 98
5 (3) 002228- MELLORS 74 (G) (M Heaton-Ellis) M Heaton-Ellis 4-8-2 S Drowne 89
6 (6) 600/000- PRIVATE FIGURE 53 (CD,G) (R Mooney) D Marks 6-8-4 T Sprake 89
7 (4) 500063- BARGASH 24 (D,F,G) (J Pugh) P Evans 5-8-1 G Carter 95
8 (7) 050304- UNSPOKEN PRAYER 8 (Mrs S Baker) J Arnold 4-7-13 M Baird (3) 90

BETTING: 11-4 Fort Knox, 7-2 Bargash, 9-2 Step On Degas, 5-1 Sea Danzig, 6-1 Mellors, 8-1 others.
1996: NO CORRESPONDING DIVISION

FORM FOCUS

SEA DANZIG 1¾l and head 3rd of Dutch Martin in handicap at Wolverhampton (AW, 7f). STEP ON DEGAS 1¾l 2nd of 14 to Bold Effort in handicap here (AW, 6f) with JO MAXIMUS (12lb better off) 7¾l 9th. FORT KNOX 8l 4th of 15 to Speedy Classic in handicap over course and distance (AW). MELLORS 9l 2nd of 5 to Pride Of Hayling in handicap at Brighton (5f 59yds, firm) on penultimate start. BARGASH 2½l and neck 3rd of 12 to Apollo Red in handicap over course and distance (AW).
Selection: SEA DANZIG

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Runs	%	JOCKEYS	Winners	Rides	%
T Barron	8	26	30.8	J Weaver	73	355	20.6
M Walker	13	47	27.7	W Ryan	23	128	18.0
L Montague Hall	11	49	22.4	C Scally	6	40	15.0
J Berry	30	141	21.3	S Whitworth	31	213	14.6
P Haslam	14	77	18.2	D Griffiths	5	[illegible]	13.9

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4/1 Steamroller Stanly
4/1 Tart
9/2 General Haven
11/2 Nikita's Star
13/2 Out On A Promise
14/1 No Speeches
25/1 A Million Watts
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RACING: TRAINERS DEFY TESTING CONDITIONS AT HOME TO DOMINATE SOUTHWELL PROGRAMME

Yorkshire stables complete whitewash

By Our Racing Staff

HUGH ROUTLEDGE

Domino Flyer gives Wilson, his amateur rider, a first Flat success as he leads home Desert Invader against the wintry backdrop of Southwell yesterday

YORKSHIRE stables swept the board at Southwell yesterday, supplying all six winners on the Fibresand surface as punters shivered in sub-zero temperatures. The Arctic weather has been particularly severe on the training centres of Malton and Middleham, but it did not stop Pat Haslam from taking his tally for the year to four with a 67-1 double.

David Nicholls also doubled his score, while Ann Swinbank, Les Eyre and Maurice Camacho opened their accounts for the new year.

Haslam has made a fine start to the year, having tasted success on each of the first three days of the season. On the mark with Going For Broke at Southwell on New Year's Day and Ultra Beet at Lingfield on Thursday, he extended his sequence with Parklife and Pet Express.

After Steve Drowne had steered Parklife to a six-length victory over Raffles Rooster in the Derbyshire Maiden Handicap, Haslam, who was wearing four layers of clothing to keep out the cold, said: "I've got ten to run on the all-weather and, although I also made a good start to 1996, it was nothing to compare with this." The trainer ended last year with 17 winners.

The Middleham trainer was celebrating again as he welcomed the Lindsay Charnock-ridden Pet Express, a 16-1 chance, into the winner's enclosure after his half-length triumph over Patina, the 13-8 favourite, in the Rutland Handicap. "I suppose that makes me the leading Flat trainer this year," he said.

Charnock himself had initiated a double 30 minutes earlier with a forceful ride on the Maurice Camacho-trained Sarasi, who defeated Forzair by a length to capture the Yorkshire Selling Stakes.

Nicholls maintained his good start to the new year when Joseph's Wine came home three lengths clear of Spencer's Revenge in the Leicestershire Claiming Stakes. Nicholls had won over the course with Anonym 48 hours earlier.

Ann Swinbank may have had her stream of jumping winners interrupted by the weather but it was business as usual on the Fibresand as Domino Flyer, ridden by Chris Wilson, clinched a third course victory when capturing the Lincolnshire Amateur Riders' Handicap.

Les Eyre, with a remarkable 75-winner Flat score to his credit last year, got off the mark for the new term with the victory of Brutal Fantasy in the Nottinghamshire Handicap.

MUSSELBURGH

THUNDERER

12.35 Falcon's Flame. 1.05 Haughton Lad. 1.35 Bold Account. 2.05 Shining Edge. 2.35 Aide Memoire. 3.05 Bas De Laine. 3.35 Dig For Gold.

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM (GOOD IN PLACES) (7.30AM INSPECTION) SIS

12.35 MAC HENRY JUVENILE MAIDEN HURDLE (£2,248: 2m) (9 runners)

1 0 AMAZING SAIL 19 Miss M Milligan 11-5 ... A S Smith
2 CRAIGNAIRN 9F J Eyre 11-5 ... B Storey
3 2 FALCON'S FLAME 30 Mrs J Ramsden 11-5 ... A P McCoy
4 HIGH HOPE HENRY 91F M Hammond 11-5 ... D Bentley
5 54 J J BABOO 19 M Hammond 11-5 ... R Garritty
6 0 MOUNTAIN DREAM 8 B Allen 11-5 ... [illegible]
7 3 PHANTOM HAZE 30 C Parker 11-5 ... D Parker
8 0 SALTBY HENPECKED 31 [illegible] ... [illegible]
9 P RAMOZRA 19 A Whillans 11-0 ... A Dobbin

6-4 Falcon's Flame, 5-2 Phantom Haze, 6-1 J J Baboo, 8-1 Craignairn, High Hope Henry, 12-1 Saltby Henpecked, 14-1 Mountain Dream, 16-1 others.

1.05 NEW YEAR CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,332: 3m) (12)

1 2122 TRAP DANCER 38 (D,BF,G) P Monteith 9-12-0 ... C McCormack (3) 92
2 5525 TALLEUBERALIS B (F) L Lungo 9-11-6 ... W Dowling (7) 96
3 0422 D'ARBLAY STREET 8 (G,S) W Kemp 8-11-5 ... A K Smith (7) 94
4 4-33 HIGHLAND PARK 58 (F) R Craggs 11-11-0 ... G Cahill 91
5 0061 BARNSTORMER 26 (B,CD,F,G) E Elliott 11-10-6 ... D Walsh 91
6 F05- GREENFIELD MANOR 201 J Sisterson 10-10-6 ... S Taylor —
7 06-6 DENTICULATA 16 (F,S) P Spottiswood 9-10-4 ... F Leahy [illegible]
8 3-50 MARDOOD 24 (G,S) S Clark 12-10-4 ... B Grattan (3) 95
9 2246 HAUGHTON LAD 29 J Parkes 8-10-2 ... E Callaghan 96
10 P500 RUBER 24 (F,G,S) R Thomson 10-10-0 ... N Horrocks (5) 90
11 0-25 DASHMAR 15 (V) Mrs L Plater 10-10-0 ... Michael Brennan 94
12 0440 THORNTOUN ESTATE 14 M Todhunter 4-10-0 ... G Lee 95

3-1 D'Arblay Street, 7-2 Trap Dancer, 9-2 Talleubelais, 6-1 Barnstormer, 7-1 Highland Park, 8-1 Thorntoun Estate, 10-1 Haughton Lad, 12-1 others.

1.35 MUSSELBURGH NEW YEAR NOVICES CHASE (£2,949: 2m 4f) (5)

1 122F- BALLYLINE 39 (G) W Kemp 6-11-10 ... A Dobbin 95
2 -610 DEVILRY 50 (G,S) R Craggs 7-11-10 ... N Smith 95
3 4243 BOLD ACCOUNT 24 (G) G Moore 7-11-3 ... N Bentley [illegible]
4 -33P KENMARE RIVER 25 (B) R Collins 7-11-3 ... A Thornton 76
5 P-31 TRUMP 8 (F,G,S) C Parker 8-11-3 ... D Parker —

7-4 Trump, 3-1 Bold Account, 7-2 Ballyline, 4-1 Devilry, 8-1 Kenmare River.

2.05 JOINT COMMITTEE HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,803: 2m) (7)

1 5525 DONE WELL 24 (D,F,G) P Monteith 5-12-0 ... A Dobbin 99
2 -113 PRIZEFIGHTER 50 (CD,BF,F) J Eyre 5-11-10 ... B Storey 94
3 4311 SHINING EDGE 14 (D,F,G,S) T Easterby 5-11-10 ... A P McCoy 99
4 -271 STASH THE CASH 26 (CD,F,G,S) M Hammond 8-11-6 ... R Garritty [illegible]
5 135- EUROLINK THE REBEL 222 (CD,F) S Clark 5-10-10 ... R Supple 92
6 2601 KILNAMARTYRA GIRL 26 (CD,F) J Parkes 7-10-0 ... R Johnson 97
7 U-52 RAPID MOVER 18 (B,CD,F,G) D Nolan 10-10-0 ... M Moloney 99

5-2 Shining Edge, 11-4 Stash The Cash, 4-1 Prizefighter, 9-2 Done Well, 7-1 Kilnamartyra Girl, 8-1 Eurolink The Rebel, 10-1 Rapid Mover.

2.35 HONEST TOUN MARES ONLY HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,682: 2m 4f) (13)

1 3513 WAYUPHILL 8 (BF,G,S) C Parker 10-11-10 ... B Storey —
2 0SRF BOLANEY GIRL 25 (C,F) F Murtagh 8-11-8 ... A Dobbin 90
3 /5 SKIDDAW SAMBA 32 (F) Mrs M Reveley 8-11-7 ... P Niven —
4 3-36 MISS GREENYARDS 32 (BF,F,S) A Whillans 6-11-6 ... S Taylor (5) 89
5 6642 AIDE MEMOIRE 19 (S) R Johnson 8-10-13 ... K Johnson 86
6 5-30 AUNTIE ALICE 28 J Fitzgerald 7-10-13 ... A P McCoy 85
7 434F AMBER HOLLY 24 J Dixon 8-10-12 ... F Perratt 90
8 -103 PEGGY GORDON 28 (D,F) Mrs D Thomson 8-10-12 ... Miss P Robson 96
9 4054 SIMAND 17 (G) G Moore 5-10-11 ... J Callaghan 89
10 1P0P ANCHORENA 16 (D,F) D Barker 5-10-10 ... R Johnson 90
11 024 ALWAROA 31 M Hammond 4-10-5 ... R Garritty 85
12 PP-4 MORE CHAMPAGNE 33 Mrs D Thomson 7-10-0 ... G Cahill 88
13 -850 WALK IN THE WILD 83 D Nolan 5-10-0 ... M Moloney —

9-2 Skiddaw Samba, 5-1 Wayuphill, 6-1 Miss Greenyards, 7-1 Bolaney Girl, 8-1 Alwaroa, Aide Memoire, 10-1 Auntie Alice, Peggy Gordon, 12-1 others.

3.05 QUEEN'S STAND HANDICAP CHASE (£3,415: 3m) (4)

1 1311 BAS DE LAINE 43 (F,G) M Hammond 11-12-0 ... R Garritty 97
2 -422 FIVELEIGH BUILDS 43 (D,F,G,S) Miss L Russell 10-11-13 ... A Thornton 94
3 3U02 GALE AHEAD 31 (D,F,G) G Moore 7-10-1 ... N Bentley 94
4 1216 CHARMING GALE 18 (V,CD,F,G,S) Mrs S Bradburne 10-10-1 ... M Foster [illegible]

5-4 Bas De Laine, 3-1 Gale Ahead, 7-2 Charming Gale, 9-2 Fiveleigh Builds.

3.35 FIRST OF MANY INTERMEDIATE OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,245: 2m) (13)

1 6 BRANDSBY MINSTER 18 P Beaumont 6-11-4 ... B Grattan (7) —
2 COTTSTOWN BOY Mrs S Bradburne 6-11-4 ... M Foster —
3 3- LORD PODGSKI 291 P Monteith 6-11-4 ... A Dobbin —
4 5-0 SMIDDY LAD 32 R Shiels 6-11-4 ... D Bentley —
5 STONESBY G Moore 5-11-4 ... J Callaghan —
6 04 THE STUFFED PUFFIN 16 L Lungo 6-11-4 ... A P McCoy —
7 0 JESSICA ONE 54 Mrs M Reveley 6-10-13 ... P Niven —
8 AUTUMN LORD P Beaumont 4-10-6 ... R Supple —
9 BUSTER TWO J Haldane 4-10-6 ... A S Smith —
10 DIG FOR GOLD Miss S Hall 4-10-6 ... F Leahy (5) —
11 EB GO B Beeman 4-10-6 ... H Beedman (5) —
12 HAMMERS DEAL D Nolan 4-10-6 ... M Moloney —
13 LOST IN THE POST C Thornton 4-10-6 ... N Horrocks (7) —

5-2 Lord Podgski, 4-1 Lost In The Post, 5-1 The Stuffed Puffin, 6-1 Jessica One, 7-1 Stonesby, 8-1 Brandsby Minster, 10-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: M Hammond, 24 winners from 88 runners, 27.3%; C Parker, 7 from 32, 21.9%; J Eyre, 5 from 24, 20.8%; L Lungo, 5 from 24, 20.8%; Mrs M Reveley, 7 from 34, 20.6%; P Monteith, 9 from 49, 18.8%.

JOCKEYS: R Garritty, 8 winners from 32 rides, 25.0%; M Foster, 3 from 12, 25.0%; P Niven, 11 from 53, 20.8%; D Parker, 7 from 35, 20.0%; J Callaghan, 6 from 33, 18.2%; D Bentley, 4 from 28, 14.3%.

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Lingfield Park: 1.15 Old Irish Wing, 3.15 Almenijzon. Musselburgh: 1.05 Dashmar, 1.35 Kenmare River. Wolverhampton: 3.30 Fast Spin, 4.00 Mono Lady.

WOLVERHAMPTON

THUNDERER

1.00 Oneforthedicth. 1.30 Cats Bottom. 2.00 Red Raja. 2.30 Leigh Crofter. 3.00 Primula Bairn. 3.30 Komiasta. 4.00 Three Weeks. 4.30 Star Talent.

GOING: STANDARD DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE SIS

1.00 MANNY BERNSTEIN BOOKMAKERS MAIDEN STAKES (£3,436: 1m 1f 79yd) (13 runners)

1 /02- HOLDERS HILL 7 M Meagher 5-9-0 ... J Quinn 9
2 -80- DOUBLE INDEMNITY 139 G Bravery 4-8-13 ... D Wright 2
3 080- JUBILEE SCHOLAR 22 K McAuliffe 4-8-13 ... F Lynch (3) 5
4 -000- NORTHERN DIAMOND 31J Miss M Rowland 4-8-13 ... N Carlisle 3
5 044- ONE DREAM 5 (V) B Smart 4-8-13 ... R Perham 1
6 -000- ROPERT MANNERS 119 E Alston 4-8-13 ... S D Williams 12
7 -594- SOVIET KING 173 P Mitchell 4-8-13 ... C Rutter 13
8 -320- DEGREE 145 S Williams 4-8-8 ... Darren Williams (7) 8
9 000- ECCENTRIC DANCER 43 (B) M Kelley 4-8-8 ... J Fanning 10
10 -040- ONEFORTHEDICTH 82 J Fetherston 4-8-8 ... N Kelley (5) 4
11 10-0 SALLY ARMSTRONG 3 C Thornton 4-8-8 ... D McKeown 6
12 -24- SOUNDS LEGAL 7 P Evans 4-8-8 ... A Culhane 7
13 -000- TALLULAH BELLE 80J N Littmoden 4-8-8 ... T G McLaughlin 11

3-1 Oneforthedicth, 4-1 Soviet King, 5-1 Degree, 8-1 Holders Hill, Sounds Legal, 8-1 One Dream, 10-1 Sally Armstrong, 12-1 others.

1.30 MANNY BERNSTEIN LEICESTER HANDICAP (Div I: £2,453: 1m 1f 79yd) (8)

1 140- FOREST BOY 29J (G,S) J Bradley 4-9-13 ... C Rutter 2
2 -80/ COURT NAP 21J S Mellor 5-9-6 ... R Perham 3
3 61-3 CATS BOTTOM 1 (F,B) A Newcombe 5-8-10 ... J Quinn 8
4 -066- RED TIE AFFAIR 19J J Bradley 4-8-8 ... L Charnock 5
5 /440- DESERT LORE 264 (B) R McKellar 6-8-8 ... D Wright 7
6 500- DHES-C 16 (C,G) R Hollinshead 4-7-10 ... N Carlisle 4
7 -000- ROUSSI 28 D Nicholls 5-7-10 ... J Bramhill (7) 6
8 -560- SOUTHERN RULE 16 (B,F) Miss M Rowland 10-7-10 ... N Kennedy 1

6-4 Cats Bottom, 4-1 Forest Boy, 5-1 Roussi, 7-1 Dhes-C, 8-1 Red Tie Affair, Desert Lore, 12-1 others.

2.00 MANNY BERNSTEIN COVENTRY HANDICAP (£2,496: 1m 6f 166yd) (9)

1 505- BEB PHANTOM 15J (C,G) S Mellor 5-9-10 ... R Perham 2
2 581- CANARY FALCON 7 (B,C,G) R O'Sullivan 6-9-9 ... D Biggs 8
3 040- EVEZIO RUFO 14J (V,S) N Littmoden 5-9-5 ... T G McLaughlin 6
4 405- PHILMIST 22 (B,G) J Hetherton 5-9-1 ... N Kennedy 5
5 060- RED RAJA 14J P Mitchell 4-9-0 ... C Rutter 7
6 542- IN THE MONEY 7 (C,F,G) R Hollinshead 8-8-0 ... F Lynch (3) 9
7 454- THE GREAT FLOOD 42J C Dwyer 4-8-10 ... A Culhane 4
8 U51- MR SPECULATOR 21 (V,C,D,F,G) J Banks 4-8-8 ... J Quinn 1
9 304- TREMENDISTO 32J J Wilson 7-7-12 ... Angela Hartley (7) 3

9-4 Mr Speculator, 3-1 Red Raja, 4-1 Canary Falcon, 6-1 In The Money, 8-1 Red Phantom, Philmist, 10-1 others.

2.30 MANNY BERNSTEIN WEDNESBURY HANDICAP (Div I: £2,900: 7f) (8)

1 60-5 LITTLE IBNR 3 (CD,F,G) P Evans 6-9-13 ... Anthony Bond (7) 4
2 100- SAD YAKOUN 7 (D,S) M Meagher 4-9-8 ... J Quinn 1
3 414- LEIGH CROFTER 7 (B,CD,F,G,S) P Cundell 8-9-5 ... R Perham 2
4 200- DAWALIB 94 (C,D,F,G) D Haydn Jones 7-9-0 ... A Mackay 5
5 034- GULF SHAADI 7 (CD,G) E Alston 5-8-12 ... A Culhane 6
6 252- SOOTY TERN 7 (F,G,S) J Bradley 10-8-12 ... L Charnock 7
7 200- THE FUGATIVE 15 P Mitchell 4-8-2 ... C Rutter 3
8 500- BADGE 21 (B) K Bailey 6-8-0 ... D Wright 8

2-1 Leigh Crofter, 4-1 Little Ibnr, 5-1 Gulf Shaadi, 6-1 Sooty Tern, 7-1 The Fugative, 8-1 Sad Yakoun, 10-1 others.

3.00 MANNY BERNSTEIN BIRMINGHAM CLAIMING STAKES (£2,752: 5f) (8)

1 002- BOFFY 7 (B,CD,G) B Baugh 4-9-6 ... R Perham 4
2 000- KRYSTAL MAX 28 (D,F,G) T Barron 4-9-6 ... Victoria Appleby (7) 2
3 641- AMINGTON LASS 7 (CD,G) P Evans 4-9-5 ... A Culhane 3
4 469- SUE ME 38 (B,S) W Muir 5-9-2 ... J Wilkinson (7) 1
5 550- WARM HEARTED 188 A Newcombe 5-9-2 ... A Mackay 5
6 406- AMY LEIGH 7 (B,D,G) J Wilson 4-9-1 ... F Norton 6
7 665- FANCY DESIGN 9 (V) P Mitchell 4-9-1 ... C Rutter 7
8 024- PRIMULA BAIRN 16 (B,CD,G,S) D Nicholls 7-9-1 ... Alex Greaves 8

5-2 Krystal Max, 11-4 Primula Bairn, 7-2 Amington Lass, 6-1 Boffy, 8-1 Sue Me, Amy Leigh, 10-1 others.

3.30 MANNY BERNSTEIN WALSALL LIMITED STAKES (3-Y-O: £2,406: 1m 100yd) (6)

1 61-4 FAST SPIN 3 (B,BF,G) T Barron 9-1 ... A Culhane 6
2 001- KOMIASTA 7 (C,G) J Wilson 9-1 ... F Norton 1
3 25-3 SKELTON SOVEREIGN 3 (F) R Hollinshead 9-1 ... F Lynch (3) 5
4 300- GLOBETROTTER 77 M Johnston 8-12 ... D McKeown 3
5 235- SENATE SWINGS 8 W Muir 8-12 ... J Quinn 2
6 500- FLOOD'S HOT STUFF 83 N Littmoden 8-9 ... T G McLaughlin 4

9-4 Komiasta, 11-4 Fast Spin, 4-1 Skelton Sovereign, 9-2 Globetrotter, 7-1 Senate Swings, 20-1 Flood's Hot Stuff.

4.00 MANNY BERNSTEIN LEICESTER HANDICAP (Div II: £2,453: 1m 1f 79yd) (8)

1 450- EXPLOSIVE POWER 21 (CD,G) G Bravery 6-10-0 ... D Wright 7
2 211- THREE WEEKS 16 (C,G) W Muir 4-9-4 ... F Lynch (3) 4
3 445- SUGA HAWK 183 (G) E Alston 5-8-13 ... A Culhane 1
4 385- BEAUMAN 16 (S) P Evans 7-8-12 ... Anthony Bond (7) 2
5 511- SLIEVENAMON 8 (CD,G) J Banks 4-8-10 ... J Quinn 3
6 646- MONO LADY 16 (B,D,S) D Haydn Jones 4-8-5 ... A Mackay 5
7 000- PRINCELY AFFAIR 31J (F) J Bradley 4-8-1 ... L Charnock 8
8 060- DIA GEORGY 46 (CD,F,G,S) C Dwyer 6-7-10 ... F Norton 6

7-4 Three Weeks, 3-1 Slievenamon, 4-1 Beauman, 6-1 Mono Lady, 8-1 Suga Hawk, Explosive Power, 10-1 others.

4.30 MANNY BERNSTEIN WEDNESBURY HANDICAP (Div II: £2,884: 7f) (8)

1 425- STAR TALENT 15 (D,F,G,S) Miss G Kelleway 6-10-0 ... D Bridgwater 7
2 101- ELITE HOPE 7 (CD,G) N Tinkler 5-9-10 ... F Lynch (3) 8
3 012- MARJORIE ROSE 7 (C,G) A Bailey 4-9-8 ... D Wright 4
4 /20- LIVE PROJECT 350 (D,S) M Johnston 5-9-3 ... D McKeown 3
5 045- LIA FAIL 7 (C,G) R Hollinshead 4-8-0 ... J Quinn 5
6 030- ZAHRAN 22 (D,F,G) J Bradley 5-8-0 ... L Charnock 6
7 00/ JUSTFORTHERECORD 421 B Millman 5-7-12 ... F Norton 2
8 630- PRINCESSE LYPHARD 5 M Polglase 4-7-10 ... N Carlisle 1

7-4 Elite Hope, 11-4 Marjorie Rose, 4-1 Star Talent, 6-1 Live Project, 8-1 Lia Fail, Zahran, 10-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: M Johnston, 43 winners from 181 runners, 23.8%; P Mitchell, 4 from 17, 23.5%; B Smart, 6 from 28, 21.4%; G Bravery, 3 from 14, 21.4%; J Banks, 3 from 14, 21.4%.

JOCKEYS: Anthony Bond, 3 winners from 7 rides, 42.9%; Alex Greaves, 7 from 45, 15.6%; D Wright, 23 from 205, 11.2%; L Charnock, 12 from 111, 10.8%. Only qualifiers.

Musselburgh draws McCoy

HOPES are high that Musselburgh can provide the National Hunt programme with a rare respite from the weather. The course, which last Friday staged the only jumps meeting since Boxing Day, passed an inspection at noon yesterday and, although a 7.30 inspection has been planned for this morning, officials believe only a deterioration in conditions will prevent the fixture taking place.

Mark Kershaw, the clerk of the course, said yesterday: "We've no frost. There is a little bit of slush in places but that is not a problem. We have a very good chance unless there is a severe deterioration. The forecast is for the temperature to drop to zero tonight with possibly the odd shower, so we called a precautionary inspection."

Assuming that the meeting survives, Tony McCoy, the champion jockey, will make his first visit to the track. McCoy, 61 winners clear of Adrian Maguire in the defence of his National Hunt title, has four booked rides. "The forecast for the week ahead does not look good so I may as well take this opportunity and get to know some trainers in the north," McCoy said. "I have rides for Jimmy Fitzgerald and Len Lungo, whom I have ridden for before, but I've never ridden for Lynda Ramsden."

Lingfield and Wolverhampton stage all-weather Flat fixtures today, but a resumption of a normal racing service still looks a long way off. The situation is already described as "hopeless" for Monday's only jumping meeting at Folkestone.

INSPECTIONS

MONDAY'S MEETINGS
SOUTHWELL: all-weather
FOLKESTONE: noon today (snow)

TUESDAY
LINGFIELD PARK: all-weather
LEICESTER: frozen.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Southwell

Going: standard

1.00 (1m) 1, JOSEPH'S WINE (Alex Greaves, 7-1); 2, Spencer's Revenge (G Bardwell, 8-1); 3, Bernard Seven (A Clark, 5-1). ALSO RAN: 11-8 fav Absolute Magic, 7-2 Chadleigh Lane (6th), 25 Giddy (4th), Ruby Angel, 50 Afaan (5th), Broughtons Relish, Lady Eclat, Magication, Spanish Stripper, 100 Shoja. 13 ran. NR: Credit Call. 3l, 1¾l, 2l, 1¾l, 10l. D Nicholls at Thirsk. Tote: £9.20; £2.60, £1.10, £2.50. DF: £20.10. Trio: £35.80. CSF: £58.85.

1.30 (1m) 1, DOMINO FLYER (Mr Chris Wilson, 6-1, Richard Evans's nap); 2, Desert Invader (Mr R Hale, 10-1); 3, Cats Bottom (Mr T McCarthy, 7-1). ALSO RAN: 3-1 fav Kingchip Boy, 13-2 Montone (4th), 8 Twin Creeks, 11 Napoleon's Return, 12 Awesome Venture, 20 Carol Again, First Gold (6th), Ring The Chief, 33 Globe Runner, 50 Dream Carrier, Fred's Delight, Royal Acclaim (5th). 15 ran. 3l, 1¾l, 5l, 5l, sh hd. Mrs A Swinbank at Richmond. Tote: £7.60; £3.20, £3.30, £2.00. DF: £35.10. Trio: £122.60. CSF: £61.14. Tricast: £397.56.

2.00 (1m 4f) 1, PARKLIFE (S Drowne, 3-1 fav); 2, Raffles Rooster (D Griffiths, 4-1); 3, Shepherds Rest (J Quinn, 4-1). ALSO RAN: 9 Calendula, 10 Burning Flame (6th), 11 El Don, 12 Mustang (5th), 16 Nautical Jewel, Swandale Flyer (4th), 20 Ballet De Cour, Turnill House, 33 Captain Tandy, Dispol Dancer, 50 Ela Mac, 66 Acerbus Dulcis. 15 ran. 6l, 9l, 2½l, 3½l, 1¾l. P Haslam at Middleham. Tote: £4.60; £1.50, £1.40, £1.40. DF: £9.50. Trio: £8.40. CSF: £15.96. Tricast: £48.26.

2.30 (6f) 1, BRUTAL FANTASY (R Lappin, 10-1); 2, Slouxrouge (G Carter, 6-1); 3, Enchanting Eve (G Faulkner, 8-1). ALSO RAN: 2-1 fav Jay-Owe-Two, 11-4 Double-O (6th), 11-2 Sharp Return (5th), 8 Master Foley (4th), 10 C-Harry. 8 ran. 2l, 4l, hd, 7l, ¾l. J Eyre at Thirsk. Tote: £13.90; £4.00, £1.90, £3.80. DF: £49.90. CSF: £69.50. Tricast: £483.47.

3.00 (1m 3f) 1, SARASI (L Charnock, 6-1); 2, Forzair (W Ryan, 5-1); 3, Threesocks (R Perham, 16-1). ALSO RAN: 8-11 fav Calder King (5th), 8 Flint And Steel, 14 Hornpipe, 16 Al Helal (6th), Fenian Court, 25 Undawaterscubadiva (4th), 33 Britannia Mills, Chilly Lad, Jeanne Cutrona, 50 Blue Domain, Bold Charlie. 14 ran. 1l, ¾l, 1¾l, 1¾l, ½l. M Camacho at Malton. Tote: £7.00; £2.00, £1.20, £5.00. DF: £17.10. Trio: £125.20. CSF: £34.07. No bid.

3.30 (7f) 1, PET EXPRESS (L Charnock, 16-1); 2, Patina (W Ryan, 13-8 fav); 3, Haver Golf Dancer (G Carter, 6-1). ALSO RAN: 4 Lycius Touch (6th), 5 Come Dancing, 8 Silent Weapon (4th), 10 Full Traceability (5th), 33 Amy. 8 ran. ½l, 5l, 1¼l, 2½l, 1l. P Haslam at Middleham. Tote: £20.80; £4.80, £1.10, £1.10. DF: £46.20. CSF: £42.05. Tricast: £169.40.

Jackpot: not won (pool of £4,462.74 carried forward to Lingfield Park today).

Placepot: £119.80. Quadpot: £18.80.

☐ Ladbrokes believes Frankie Dettori will ride in the region of 200 winners in Britain this year. The company rates the bands 191-200 and 201-210 as joint-favourites at 100-30. "Although he managed only 123 winners last year because of injury, Frankie has ridden 200 in each of the two previous years," Ladbrokes's spokesman, Ian Wassell, said.

☐ William Hill has cut Khayrawani to 9-2 (from 11-2) for The Ladbroke, a handicap hurdle at Leopardstown a week today. Other leading prices: 8-1 Family Way, 10-1 Miltonfield, Penny A Day, 12-1 Dardjini, King Of Kerry, 14-1 Black Queen, Executive Design, 16-1 bar.

SQUASH

Russell on collision course with Egyptians

By Colin McQuillan

JOHN RUSSELL, of Kent, yesterday started his campaign for the Drysdale Cup at the Commercial Union British junior open championships in Sheffield in the same mood with which he finished last year's world junior championships in Cairo, determined to frustrate all Egyptians in his path.

Russell blew hot and cold through the world event in July, but he saved his highest temperatures for his Egyptian hosts, giving Ahmed Faizy his toughest fight on the way to a home win in the individual world championship, and pugnaciously stopping Karim El Mistikawi, a large and physical opponent, in the team final to set up a surprise victory for England.

Yesterday the fourth seed started his assault on the British open under-19 championship brushing aside 9-2, 9-2, 9-2, Mohammed Diaa, another of the talented young players who are emerging from the Egyptian squash nurseries.

There are plenty more Egyptians to whet Russell's appetite in Sheffield, although he has the daunting task of having to remove Ong Beng Hee, the No 5 seed from Malaysia, to get at them.

Faizy, the defending champion and top seed, dismissed Jonathan Smith, of Yorkshire, 9-1, 9-1, 9-3, yesterday and then learned that his early demands in the competition had been significantly reduced by the failure to appear of Pakistan's leading players, Anjad Khan and Kashif Shuja. His compatriots, Amr Shabana, the second seed and Mistikawi, the third seed, needed little more time to overcome Tommi Niinimaki, of Finland, and Matthew Clover, of Sussex, respectively. Russell will probably have to meet and beat at least two of them to lift the Drysdale Cup for the first time.

But the Kent player will need to seriously realign his sights towards Malaysia to survive a likely quarter-final clash with Ong Beng Hee on the way to all that.

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BOWLS

Deposed Bell puts selectors in dock

By David Rhys Jones

USUALLY, when a player is dropped and then lashes out at the selectors, it is safe to assume that the consumption of grapes of the sour variety has produced a bitter taste in the mouth.

Although they follow his omission from the England trial at Rushcliffe tomorrow, the harsh words John Bell aimed at the English indoor team management yesterday may, however, throw some light on why Scotland has been allowed to monopolise the home international series for the past six years.

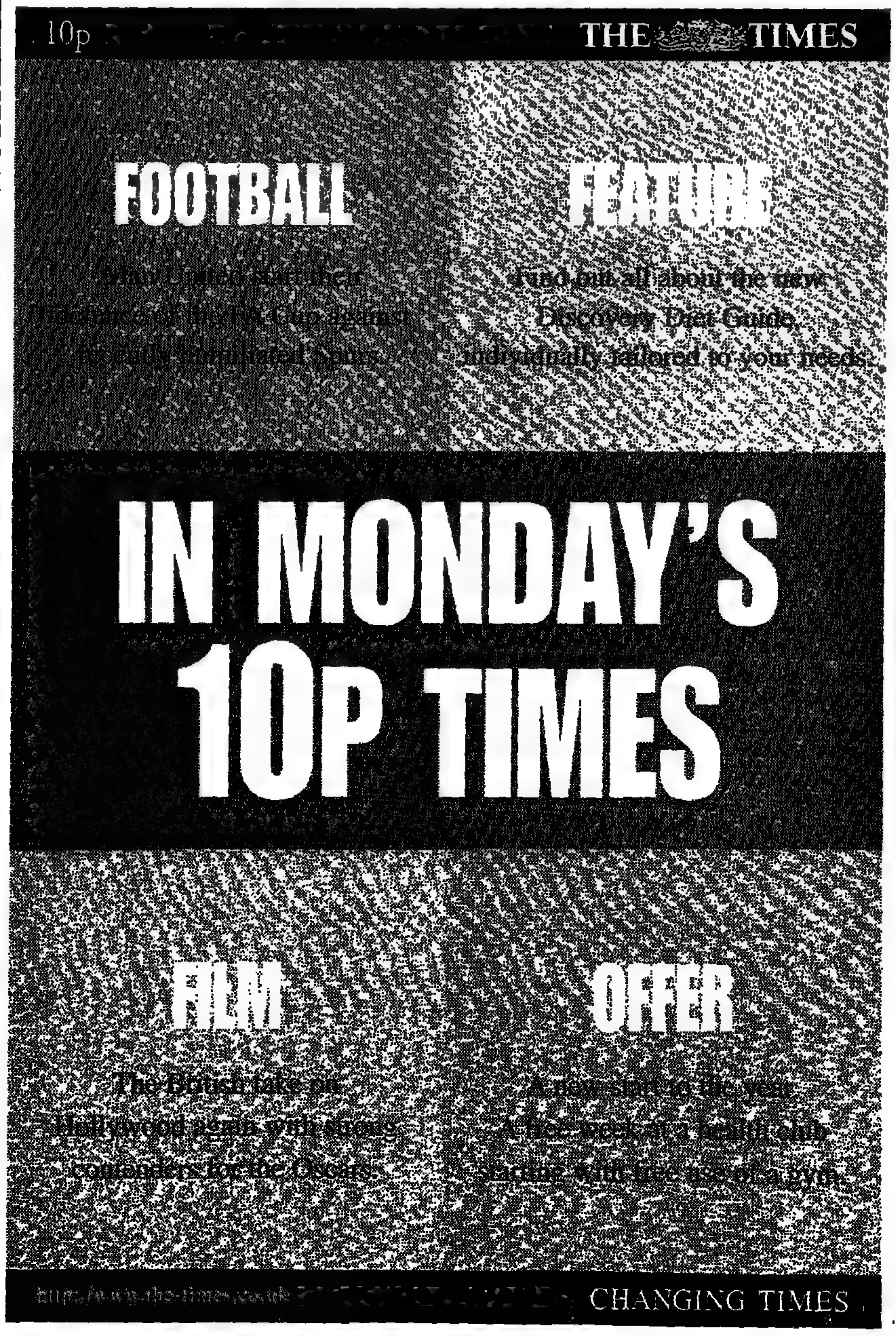
Bell, Carlisle's tourism and marketing manager, is one of the funniest men on the sport's after-dinner circuit. There was no trace of a twinkle, however, as he accused England officials of employing an "inept short-term selection policy".

Claiming he was not simply reacting to being dropped, Bell said: "I was thoroughly disillusioned before these teams were announced. The time is right for a change, and I am not disappointed. After the way I played last year, I wasn't expecting to be considered.

"Team confidence desperately needs to be rebuilt, because there has been a less than happy atmosphere in the camp. After our success in the mid-80s, there has been an inept short-term selection policy, and a series of humiliating organisational dictates imposed on the team."

"Team management was fine when we were winning, but I've seen the system go down badly since we won our last series in 1990," he added. "Our lowest point was in Rushcliffe in 1993, when we had team talks from what seemed to be umpteen team managers, several rollickings, and a good hiding from Scotland."

In an attempt to halt Scotland's winning run, the selectors have reshuffled the rinks, and introduced a clutch of younger players. Bell, 49, said: "I applaud the encouragement of young talent, but they will only prosper in a relaxed, tension-free atmosphere."



CRICKET

Klusener leaves India facing mountainous task

FROM JOHN WOODCOCK IN CAPE TOWN

SEVEN years ago a young South African by the name of Lance Klusener left Durban High School without having managed to win a place in their first cricket XI. Here at Newlands yesterday he scored the fastest Test hundred made for South Africa (an undefeated 102 in 100 balls), during which he shared, with Brian McMillan, a record partnership for South Africa's eighth wicket against any country, and followed it up by running out one of India opening batsmen and bowling the other.

At the beginning of last month, in Calcutta, in his first Test match, he took eight for 64 in India's second innings — and he only won his place in the side because of an injury to Craig Matthews.

As a result of all this, India are in inevitable danger of losing the second Test match no less heavily than they lost the first in Durban last week. At the close of play last night they were 29 for three in reply to South Africa's 529 for seven declared, and to make matters even worse for them, Sachin Tendulkar is much discomfited by a strained side.

South Africa's total is their highest since they were readmitted to Test cricket in 1992 and the best they have made in a Test in Cape Town. By the time Hansie Cronje called his batsmen in, in order to get 16 overs at India before the finish, the Indians had been run ragged. Klusener, who bats left-handed and bowls right and was chosen mainly for his bowling, was clubbing them around much as he pleased.

Yet until he came in, midway through the afternoon, India had not been entirely unsuccessful in the holding operation to which they were committed. The first hour of the day had in fact been theirs, South Africa making only 22 runs in that time while losing Cronje and Pollock.

For such a very good and resolute batsman, Cronje gets himself into a surprising tangle trying to fend off the short, rising ball. England make a point of playing on this, as India did yesterday morning, and it was in making more of a flinch than an attempted glance at something whistling past his chest that he was caught at the wicket down the leg side off Srinath.

This, incidentally, was no less than Mongia's twelfth catch of the series, taken in only two and a half South African innings — and he is on his honeymoon into the bargain.

But there was no way of ruffling that obdurate old dog, McMillan, who was lumbering along with a century in his sights. South Africa's main concern seemed to be to get to 400 if they could, however long it might take them, and India, for their part, were preoccupied with containment.

On pitches as good as this one their bowling really is critically thin. Kumble bowled his leg breaks much too low and fast for them to turn, and their plight cried out for the flight and guile of a Bedi or a Prasanna. The day was shining blue; the crowd cheered mockingly at the announcement that England had come unstuck again in Harare. The locals of Western Province were thoroughly enjoying themselves.

McMillan: obdurate

Gary Kirsten, who had scored a hundred on Thursday, is one of theirs; so, too, is McMillan, and so is Paul Adams, who was to take a wicket at the end of the day. What is more, Kirsten's father was the groundsman here; but that goes back to the days when Newlands resembled the Parks at Oxford — before it became the stadium it is now.

Klusener bustled in when Richardson hooked Srinath straight to long leg and, with nothing to lose and much to gain, he was soon catching up McMillan, who had a start of nearly four hours on him.

I am not sure how good a cricketer Klusener really is. He does not look either a great batsman or a great bowler in the making; he is typical, though, of that pride of young, muscular and confident South Africans, who, if they are not doing wonderful things in the surf, are throwing a rugby ball around or playing cricket in bare feet and being, almost as likely as not, born-again Christians.

South Africa came back from India three weeks ago feeling very strongly that they had a score to settle, and what a job they are making of it. McMillan eventually went to his hundred in a way that may well be unique, the quick single which took him there having to be confirmed by television. The replay was required to make sure that Klusener had not been run out in the process.

Klusener took another quarter of an hour to reach his own hundred, off a despairing Kumble and a dejected Prasad, whereupon Cronje immediately declared. Klusener and McMillan had added 147 — 23 more than Dave Nourse and Ernest Halliwell made together against Australia at Johannesburg 94 years ago.

The only surprise that remained was not that India lost three wickets, or that there was no holding Klusener, but that Donald took none of them.

SCOREBOARD FROM CAPE TOWN

SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings

A C Hudson c Mongia b Prasad	18
G Kirsten run out	103
A M Bacher c Mongia b Srinath	25
D J Cullinan c Mongia b Prasad	77
*W J Cronje c Mongia b Srinath	41
B M McMillan not out	103
S M Pollock c Tendulkar b Prasad	1
†D J Richardson c Dravid b Srinath	39
L Klusener not out	102
Extras (b 5, lb 9, nb 8)	22
Total (7 wkts dec)	529

A A Donald and P R Adams did not bat

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-37, 2-89, 3-203, 4-251, 5-291 6-299, 7-382

BOWLING: Srinath 38-8-130-3; Prasad 36-1-114-3; Ganesh 23.5-6-93-0; Kumble 51-7-136-0; Ganguly 9-1-24-0, Raman 5-1-18-0

INDIA: First Innings

W V Raman run out	5
R S Dravid b Klusener	2
S C Ganguly not out	19
B K V Prasad b Adams	0
*S R Tendulkar not out	1
Extras (nb 2)	2
Total (3 wkts)	[illegible]

†N R Mongia, M Azharuddin, V V S Laxman, A Kumble, J Srinath and D Ganesh to bat.

FALL OF WICKETS. 1-7, 2-24, 3-25.

BOWLING: Donald 6-3-7-0; Pollock 6-1-15-0, Adams 3-1-3-1, Klusener 2-1-4-1

Umpires. D G Hair (Australia) and R Koertzen (South Africa).

MIKE HUTCHINGS

Mongia, the India wicketkeeper, attempts to stump Richardson, his South African counterpart, yesterday

Lara inspires West Indies victory

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

A RESURGENT West Indies celebrated Brian Lara's return to form with a six-wicket victory over Pakistan in their limited-overs World Series match in Brisbane yesterday. However, the match was marred by further behind-the-scenes controversy as the Pakistan batsmen continued to defy an Australian government directive by advertising a tobacco company's sponsorship on their bats during the televised match.

Lara ended a dismal run of low scores by hitting 48 as West Indies maintained their recent improvement in a tense encounter at the Gabba. In reply to Pakistan's total of 197 all out in 49.5 overs, West Indies scored 198 for four with 11 balls to spare.

Carl Hooper, batting one place below Lara at No 5 in the order, scored an unbeaten 54, his twentieth half-century in limited-overs internationals, to guide his side to victory. The Kent all-rounder was joined by Jimmy Adams in an unbroken fifth-wicket partnership that was worth 74 runs by the end. Adams contributed a valuable 33 not out.

Earlier, Ian Bishop had taken four wickets for 38 and Courtney Walsh three for 40 as Pakistan stumbled to 47 for four on a lively pitch in the eighteenth over. However, Ijaz Ahmed ensured that Pakistan reached a relatively respectable total with a patient 59 off 122 balls.

Moin Khan, the wicketkeeper, added 43 in 52 balls before the Pakistanis were all out one ball short of their allocation. Curtly Ambrose, the West Indies fast bowler, defied a niggling hamstring injury to return figures of one for 26 from ten consecutive overs.

So, after losing their first two matches in the triangular competition, West Indies have now won two games in succession. West Indies, Pakistan and Australia, the hosts, all have four points from four games at the halfway stage of the qualifying round. West Indies meet Australia in their next game, also in Brisbane, tomorrow.

Of his batsmen's continuing breach of Australian anti-tobacco advertising legislation, Yawar Saeed, the Pakistan team manager, said that the team was awaiting orders from the Pakistan cricket board before removing the logos. "I'm not the policy-maker so I will have to wait until I get the new instructions," Yawar said, adding that he had notified the board of the problem.

The Australian Cricket Board has since been advised by the Australian government that the Pakistanis have until next Tuesday to remove the logos. The ACB faces a fine of A$60,000 (about £28,000) if it fails to enforce the directive.

SCOREBOARD FROM BRISBANE

PAKISTAN

Aamir Sohail c Murray b Walsh	9
Shahid Afridi c Griffith b Walsh	2
Zahoor Elahi c McLean b Bishop	14
Ijaz Ahmed c Murray b Walsh	59
Inzamam-ul-Haq c McLean b Ambrose	1
Mohammad Wasim run out	34
*Wasim Akram run out	1
†Moin Khan c Samuels b Bishop	43
Saqlain Mushtaq c Murray b Bishop	4
Shahid Nazir c Ambrose b Bishop	8
Mohammad Zahid not out	0
Extras (lb 9, w 8, nb 7)	22
Total (49.5 overs)	197

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-12, 2-12, 3-45, 4-47, 5-120, 6-124, 7-137, 8-184, 9-192.

BOWLING: Walsh 10-1-40-3; Bishop 9.5-1-38-4; Ambrose 10-0-26-1; McLean 4-0-21-0; Hooper 10-0-38-0; Adams 6-0-25-0.

WEST INDIES

S L Campbell b Saqlain	35
†J R Murray b Wasim Akram	18
A D Griffith run out	3
B C Lara c Moin b Mohammad Zahid	48
C L Hooper not out	54
J C Adams not out	33
Extras (lb 7, w 2, nb 2)	11
Total (4 wkts, 48.1 overs)	198

R G Samuels, N A M McLean, I R Bishop, C E L Ambrose and *C A Walsh did not bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-27, 2-38, 3-78, 4-134.

BOWLING: Wasim Akram 9-0-30-1; Mohammad Zahid 10-0-29-1; Shahid Nazir 9-0-37-0; Saqlain Mushtaq 10-2-38-1; Shahid Afridi 6.1-0-39-0; Aamir Sohail 5-0-19-0.

Man of the match: C L Hooper.

Umpires: R A Emerson and D J Harper.

Series standings

	P	W	L	RR	Pts
West Indies	4	2	2	.128	4
Australia	4	2	2	.025	4
Pakistan	4	2	2	-.172	4

BASKETBALL

Irish close to making critical choice

BY NICHOLAS HARLING

IF Colin Irish felt unwanted and rejected after his failure in France, the despair could not have lasted long. No sooner had the former England international returned home to Eastleigh, Hampshire, last month, depressed after his release by Cholet, than he became the man in demand, pursued by a cluster of English clubs all clamouring for his signature.

Whichever one of them signs Irish might conceivably go on to capture the Budweiser League title. Or, on the other hand, they might not. The dilemma facing at least three of the eight clubs contesting the most open championship race in history is whether they can accommodate a 6ft 6in forward who, at 35, is still extremely competitive and retains a penchant for shooting three-pointers whenever he is not bringing the ball down court.

At Cholet, Eric Girard was one coach who obviously felt that Irish could not fit in. "But I never felt I had a chance to play," Irish recalled. "Pre-season was the only time he gave me more than a few minutes on court. Having ten or 15 minutes, which is the most I ever got a game, is not for me.

"I can't figure it out because they were that keen to sign me in the first place that they made sure I did so before leaving, when I went there to try out before the season. But in the end it didn't work for me and it didn't work out for them."

Irish's unhappy French experience is unlikely to deter anyone this side of the Channel. Derby Storm invited him up to watch them last weekend

	P	W	L	F	A	Pts
Chester	16	11	5	1410	1314	22
Birmingham	16	10	6	1317	1253	20
Leopards	13	10	3	1232	1132	20
London T	13	10	3	1116	980	20
Newcastle	13	10	3	1189	1134	20
Sheffield	15	10	5	1284	1126	20
Derby	18	9	9	1546	1567	18
Manchester	15	9	6	1203	1140	18
Leicester	15	7	8	1268	1240	14
Thames Valley	14	5	9	1289	1319	10
Crystal Palace	15	3	12	1119	1274	6
Worthing	16	3	13	1286	1432	6
Hemel and Wat	15	0	15	1241	1589	0

and among those clubs who have already sounded him out are three others with title aspirations — Birmingham Bullets, Newcastle Eagles and Manchester Giants. Thames Valley Tigers and Hemel Hempstead Royals, who are at the wrong end of the table, have also expressed their interest.

"I'd had no problem adjusting to being sixth man," Irish said, "but I'm still not sure what I'm going to do. It's not about money or the best offer but about what's best for me and my family. I'll probably make up my mind when I go back to France this weekend to tie up a few loose ends."

About the only club Irish will not consider is the one he left, amid much rancour, to sign for Cholet. Worthing Bears, for whom he excelled three times in Wembley play-off triumphs, were taken to court by their former player-coach last summer in a bitter dispute over money.

Irish, who won the case, said: "I went through too much to go back there. What they did was wrong. There were no winners and losers and I was still left with the legal fees."

Mark Harvey, another former England international, parted company yesterday with Sheffield Sharks, who relinquished their position as joint league leaders last week when Chester Jets established an outright lead of two points over five other clubs.

In his place, the Sharks have signed Isaac Morgan, a product of Fairleigh Dickinson College in New Jersey, who has been averaging 20 points a game for Bellina in the Irish Superleague.

SAILING

Tibbs limps in to warm reception

CONCERT, the dismasted BT Global Challenge yacht skippered by Chris Tibbs, motored into Wellington yesterday, five days behind *Group 4*, the leg two winner, but to one of the best welcomes for any of the boats in New Zealand (Edward Gorman writes).

With her chances of winning the race, or at least finishing in the top three, now dashed, there was sympathy for her crew as she cruised in after motoring for nearly 2,000 miles.

As she crossed the finish line, she was given a gun like the rest of the fleet and two of her sister ships, *Commercial Union* and *Nuclear Electric*, sailed out to escort her in, together with the local fireboat, which set off its water jets. *Concert* will be awarded a finish time for the leg equal to that of the last boat racing, *Heath Insured II*, plus another 15 per cent of *Heath's* time.

Heath, which has a badly damaged rig, still had about 20 miles to go yesterday.

Most famous footballing clichés brought to book

SIMON BARNES

On Saturday

AS THE Christmas post continues to dribble in, filled with afterthoughts and mislaid treats, I am able to offer a questionnaire for aspiring football commentators, complete with the only acceptable answers. Look on it as the Socratic method of football commentary:

How did the player break his leg? After a challenge.

What kind of challenge? A sickening one.

What did the defender get before he was sent off? A talking-to.

And then? He took the long and lonely walk to the dressing-room.

How did his manager react? He put a consoling arm round him.

How did his manager look? Pensive.

What did he do before the game? He spelt out a warning.

How? Loud and clear.

The late equaliser Rovers scored . . ? Yes, it spared their blushes.

Where are they now? In the driving seat.

How? Firmly.

And on and on . . . all this from *A Game of Two Halves*, *Brian* by Fritz Spiegel (HarperCollins, £4.99), the main part of which is a dictionary of jargon and cliché. For example, and to quote just a few of the Fs: firing on all cylinders; a forest of legs; a formality; and, of course, football was the winner.

Hand of God?

Glenn Hoddle picked Paul Gascoigne to play football for England even as the world talked of nothing but the undenied wife-battering allegations against his man. Team selection, Hoddle said, is a footballing rather than a moral issue. Had Hoddle been a Muslim rather than a standard-bearer for the Christian, he would have taken a different attitude.

Those with good footballing memories will recall the Saudi player, Saeed Al-Awairan, scoring the most spectacular goal of the 1994 World Cup, dribbling from the halfway line to score against Belgium. Yet he was not even in the squad for the recent Asian Cup matches. It was explained that Saudi players were picked on moral as well as footballing grounds and that during Ramadan, Saeed had eaten Snickers bars, kissed a woman and drunk wine.

French connection

Meanwhile, this column's unrelenting search for an appropriate name for the cricket-related pastime — very distantly related, judging from certain performances this week — of one-day cricket continues. Mike Finlay suggests, as a variant on the schoolboy pastime of French Cricket, "*le cricket anglais*".

Sexual healing

Not everyone believes that women are a bad thing. Rachel Heyhoe Flint, for example, old friend of this column, looks back on the lonely and oppressed Christmas spent by England's cricketers in Zimbabwe. The lack of women was meant to bind them into a tight, hard, fighting unit. "Bring out the women and send back the gurus," she said. "They have so many gurus they are not playing their natural game." The most successful England cricket captain alive added: "It never occurred to us to ban men."

All in a name

Sporting language is one of the favourite themes of this column. So, too, is the slow death of sport by means of commerce. Here the two come together in a way that hammers out a warning loud and clear to all of us who watch Cornhill Test matches and the goings-on in the FA Carling Premiership.

The term "home run" is one of the most ancient in the American lexicon. It is a part of sport, a metaphor for all kinds of delights, from business success to sex. But it is now a forbidden term — at least it is if you have anything to do with Arizona Diamondbacks, a major league baseball team that opens for business in 1998.

It has been forbidden, at the express demand of Bank One, sponsor of the ballpark that is nearing completion in Phoenix. Announcers at the stadium and on the local radio station will not be permitted to refer to the sport's ultimate single achievement by its correct name. Instead, they must say a "Bank One boomer".

It remains to be seen whether this expression finds currency outside the world of official announcers, but it is a frightening prospect. Where will it all end? "All sorts of confusion out there as Cork is hit for another Cornhill Clobber." "Oh! A Carling Creamer! Quite remarkable."

Silent sweater

Golf continues to grow in popularity as a winter pastime, and no doubt it makes a pleasant change from playing sport. This seasonal expansion naturally brings its own range of commercial opportunities, the latest of which is a "noiseless golf shirt". It is a "golf wind-shirt" that is supposed to take the place of that most attractive of sporting garments, the golf woolly.

They are marketed by Golf Day in the United States and sold for a mere $110 (£66). Their great advantage is that "you don't get the swishing sound of nylon", according to John MacGregor, of Golf Day. "Golfers are a funny breed; when you are taking your arms back, a little noise can distract you." I hope they make them in pink, or they have no chance of success.

☐ *And finally, perhaps the ultimate commercial opportunity: a manufacturer of contraceptives in São Paulo, Brazil, is negotiating with football clubs to issue its products in club colours.*

DON'T WANT TO GET HEAVY? GOOD ~NEITHER DO WE

HOW TO BUST YOUR GUT
Men's Health
THE MAGAZINE FOR THE NEW YEAR

Woman of substance taking no chances this time

David Powell on Paula Radcliffe's build-up to the world cross-country championships

PAULA RADCLIFFE makes a thorough job of most things she does — four A grade A levels, a first-class degree in European studies, Britain's No 1 woman cross-country runner, and one of the best collections of sports injuries and ailments.

Given the difficulties Radcliffe has had to overcome, it is a wonder she has achieved as much as she has, but they also explain why, after four years in the senior ranks, she has yet to finish higher than eighteenth in the world cross-country championships. "It is disappointing, but I cannot say I am disappointed at the way the four years have gone," Radcliffe said.

Radcliffe has reached world and Olympic finals, but her finest achievement so far was breaking Zola Budd's British 5,000 metres record 12 days after the conclusion of the Atlanta Games. Had she enjoyed a full, uninhibited, build-up to Atlanta, she might have won a medal instead of finishing fifth.

While racing cross country in Luxembourg last winter, Radcliffe fell up a step when one of her spikes stuck in the wood. One thing led to another: tilted pelvis, tight hamstring, damaged shin-bone. She finished nineteenth in the world championships in Stellenbosch, South Africa, when her victory in Durham three months earlier had suggested she might challenge for a medal. Instead of three weeks training at altitude near Johannesburg, immediately afterwards, she spent the time in the pool there.

When she resumed training, it was with one eye on the Olympic timetable, another on the exam timetable. "I was training in the morning because then I could do a bit of cramming before going into the exam," Radcliffe said.

When form arrives late in the season, it leaves late too, and Radcliffe won the New York City road mile in September. Then along came another injury, this time to a knee, which meant that she did not make her winter debut until the Bupa County Durham cross country last weekend, when she finished third behind Gete Wami, the world champion, from Ethiopia, and Elena Fidatov, from Romania.

As Radcliffe prepares to run in the Coca-Cola International in Belfast today, against not only Wami and Fidatov, but also Iulia Negura, the European champion, from Romania, she is taking another step down the path that she hopes will lead to a world medal in Turin in March. Through her various injuries, and flu in February of 1993, Radcliffe has not had a full build-up since 1992, when she won the junior world title.

Her worst year was in 1994, when she was in tears at the world championships in Budapest as a chronic foot injury, which was to keep her out of the sport for nine months, prevented her from starting the race. It would be a cruel selector, foolish too, who votes against picking her for Turin without running the British trial. She will miss the trial, preferring to train at altitude in Albuquerque, away from Britain's cold weather, hard ground, and winter illnesses. "I am going to get it right this year," she said.

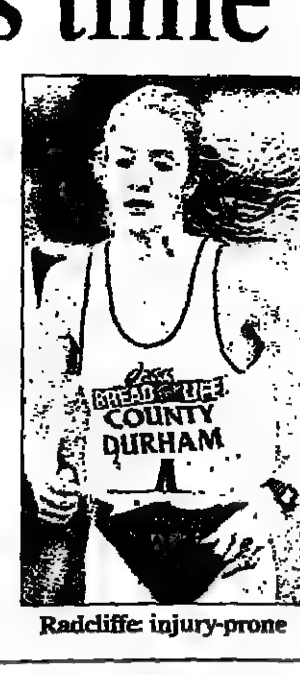
Radcliffe, 23, learnt to overcome adversity at an early age. She is anaemic and suffers from exercise-induced asthma. "Because of my anaemia I never have caffeine," she said, confessing, however, to having one coffee after training and cramming before her exams. "Because I was not used to it, it was keeping me awake."

Of her exercise-induced asthma, she said: "It gets worse when I get a cold and in the fog and pollution. I take iron tablets all the time and try to eat as much red meat as I can. It was bad in Atlanta: I had to triple dose out there."

Athletics alone is not enough to occupy her mind and, fluent in French and German, she has applied to agencies for translation work. "You cannot train 24 hours a day and, if I did not have anything else to do, I would get too caught up in running," she said.

Radcliffe's boyfriend is Curtis Robb, the 800 metres runner, whose father placed long-term bets on his son winning an Olympic title and Jamie Redknapp captaining the England football team. He might fancy a flutter on Radcliffe one day becoming Britain's first professional director of athletics.

Articulate, intelligent and engaging company, she is working with the British Athletes' Association for a brighter future; she talks of a career in international marketing, not of running athletics. But, had she the mind, the men might not feel safe in their seats.



Radcliffe: injury-prone

SNOOKER

Revenge for McManus as Higgins lets it slip

By Phil Yates

ALAN McMANUS, on the receiving end of some hefty punishment from John Higgins in their previous meetings over the past season or so, gained an overdue measure of revenge in reaching the semi-finals of the Liverpool Victoria charity challenge at Higgins's expense in Birmingham yesterday.

McManus, who trailed Higgins 4-2 and by 41 points at an advanced stage of the seventh frame, recovered and went on to win 5-4. The victory brought to an end a sequence of six consecutive defeats for McManus against his Scotland World Cup team-mate.

While McManus, who rallied from an identical predicament to beat John Parrott in the quarter-finals of the United Kingdom championship two months ago, drew great satisfaction from the result, Higgins was "disgusted" over the recurrence of an inability to "put opponents away".

It is the fourth time in less than a year that Higgins has allowed the prospect of virtually inevitable victory to evaporate. Most notably, he lost 9-8 to Nigel Bond in the British Open final, after Bond had required a snooker in the deciding frame, and 13-12 to Ronnie O'Sullivan in the last eight of the world championship after a missed pink, which would have given him a 13-11 success.

Add to that a 6-5 semi-final defeat by Peter Ebdon in the semi-finals of the Regal Scottish Masters this season, from a position of two-up with three to play, and Higgins's self-criticism became wholly understandable.

"It's par for the course right now, I'm afraid," Higgins, runner-up in this event last year, said. "It's disgusting to keep wasting chances and to lose like that against [illegible] for the world No 2. If I keep it up, I won't stay there."

Trailing [illegible] in the seventh frame, McManus was preparing to offer his hand in concession but Higgins's sloppily lost position on prime scoring territory and duly missed a difficult red. McManus then laid a snooker from which Higgins could not muster an effective escape, [illegible] of 63 in consequence.

McManus duly levelled at 4-4 and [illegible] break of 58 on his first scoring visit held sway in the deciding frame to set up a meeting with Bond or Stephen Hendry, the world champion, for a place in the final.

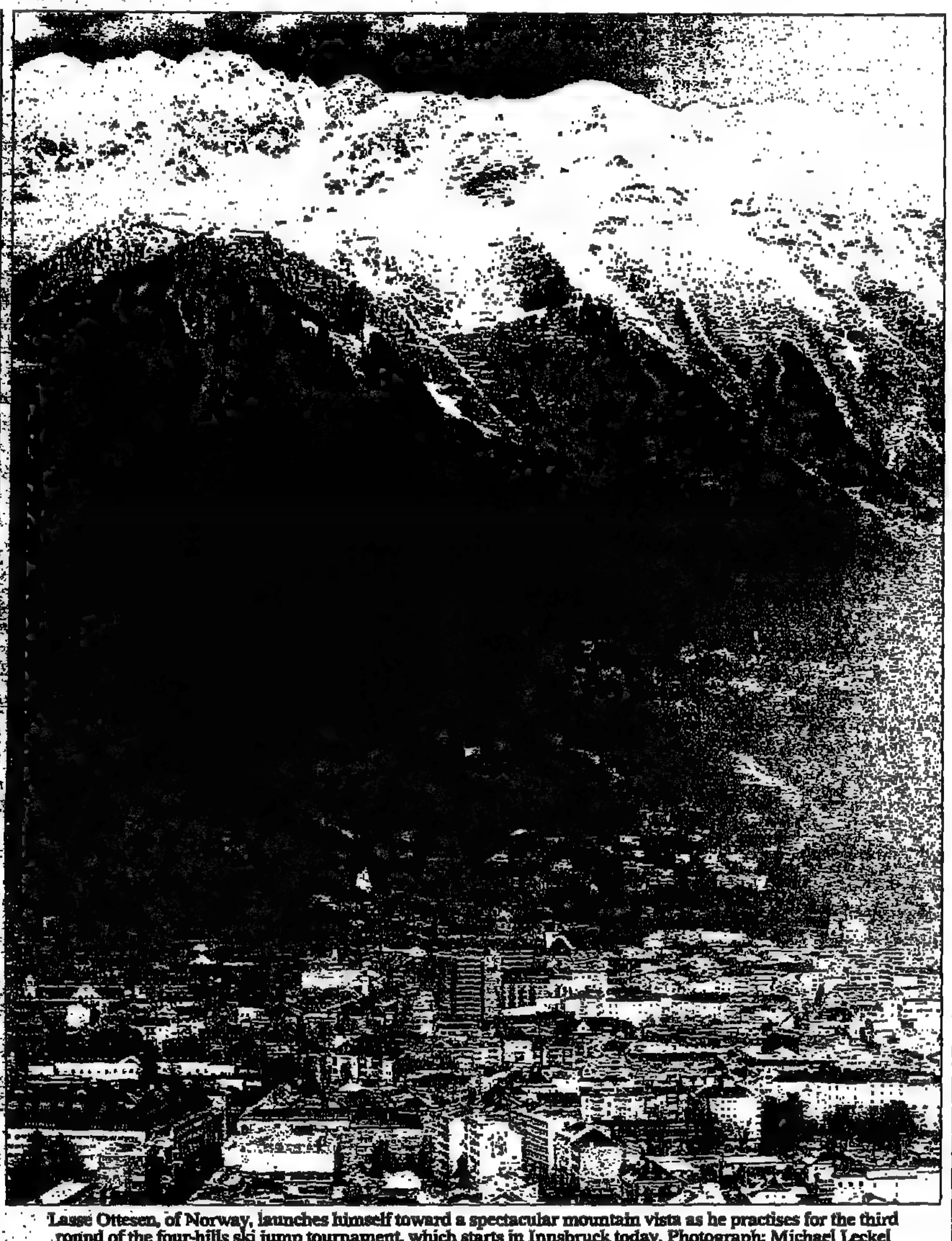
Ebdon showed himself to be a proponent of the silver lining theory after a 5-2 win over Ken Doherty, an opponent he has now defeated on seven of their nine career meetings. The perennially up-beat Londoner believes that, in some respects, four consecutive defeats before Christmas have made him a better player.

Ebdon: semi-final place

"Perhaps it's unfair to say I was complacent, but I certainly wasn't working as hard on my game as I should have," Ebdon, who compiled breaks of 45, 47, 120, and 46, said. "Getting beaten so often so early was a short, sharp shock treatment, because I got so annoyed with myself. That's why, in terms of dedication and commitment, I've got a new lease of life."

Ebdon, whose only concession to an increased practice schedule was a snooker-free Christmas Day, will face O'Sullivan, the title holder, or Parrott this afternoon in an attempt to figure in the final tomorrow.

Both McManus, playing on behalf of the Rainbow Trust, and Ebdon, representing the Carer's National Association, earned a guaranteed £15,000 donation for their respective charities. They are also each sure to collect £12,500 for themselves.


Lasse Ottesen, of Norway, launches himself toward a spectacular mountain vista as he practises for the third round of the four-hills ski jump tournament, which starts in Innsbruck today. Photograph: Michael Leckel

Panzanini makes light of victory

By Our Sports Staff

SABINA PANZANINI secured her second victory of the World Cup season in Maribor, Slovenia, yesterday and attributed her success to weight loss. Panzanini, who led an Italian one-two in the giant slalom, underwent treatment at a clinic in the summer after doctors told her that recurring back problems were caused by being overweight.

Panzanini, 24, who won in Park City, Utah, in November, produced the quickest second run to improve on a first-leg fifth place for a winning aggregate time of 2min 34.74sec. Deborah Compagnoni, the Olympic and world champion who was leading after the first run, shared second place with Anita Wachter, of Austria, in 2:34.82.

"It was nerve-racking to be standing in the finish area, watching Debbie come down," Panzanini, who has often been overshadowed by her compatriot, said. "It was a great battle but I think Debbie can win here tommorrow." Panzanini said of Compagnoni, who captured her maiden slalom victory in Semmering, Austria, last weekend and is one of the favourites for the slalom in Maribor today.

Panzanini slimmed down to around 9st 12lb, losing 11lb during the summer, and has found a marked improvement in her form. "I especially managed to improve my performance in the flatter parts of the slope where I used to previously lose so much time," she said yesterday.

Pernilla Wiberg, of Sweden, retained the lead in the overall World Cup standings with 618 points — ahead of the title-holder, Katja Seizinger, of Germany, on 534 — despite finishing a poor 25th. Wiberg, who was winner of the first of back-to-back slaloms in Semmering, is banking on performing better in the slalom today.

Even so, she impressed with a fluid second run to improve from a first leg fourteenth place to overall sixth. The 24-year-old German is tied with Panzanini in the giant slalom standings on 200 points after three races.

In Innsbruck yesterday, practice for the third station of the four-hills ski jumping tour got underway. Andreas Goldberger, of Austria, shares the lead with Primoz Peterka, of Slovenia, after two rounds.

ICE HOCKEY

Cardiff value Hodge's help

By Norman de Mesquita

KEN HODGE, whose arrival in Cardiff at the end of October coincided with the Devils' improvement in form, has been one of their most successful players, scoring at least a goal or an assist in 15 of his first 16 games for the club. On the face of it he is much like any other imported Canadian, but he does have special connections with this country.

His father, Ken Hodge Sr, spent 14 years in the National Hockey League and was that rarity in a successful NHL player, British born. Young Hodge belies his transatlantic upbringing when he says: "My father was born in Birmingham, England," with the emphasis on the *ham*, which makes it sound as though it is a recent transplant from Alabama.

When the crowded Superleague schedule allows, Hodge hopes to visit his grandmother, who still lives in Birmingham and whom he has not seen for some 15 years. He is looking forward to getting acquainted again.

Like most of the Canadians who are playing in this country, Hodge was something of a disappointment at the highest level in North America, although one has to ask if trying to make it in Boston, where his father had done particularly well, put extra pressure on him.

"The only pressure that I ever felt was the pressure that I put on myself, when I was not performing, not doing what I thought I was capable of doing," Hodge said. "But, of course, there are always going to be comparisons about who my father was. He had 14 great years in the NHL, but the pressure I had was not really caused by that."

Since he left the NHL, young Hodge has been playing in the International Hockey League, which is a rung or two below the NHL and, in October, he had a trial with a German club, but it did not work out as he had hoped. "Fortunately, Cardiff needed a player to replace the injured Randy Smith, so here I am."

What are his impressions of the Superleague? "To be honest with you, I did not think it was going to be as good a league as it is. It is certainly competitive — my first three games with the Devils all went to overtime. It is a tight-checking league and almost the same style as North American hockey." There is no doubt that the German league's loss is the Superleague's gain.

IN BRIEF

Ferreira in fine fettle for final assignment

SOUTH Africa, the No 3 seeds, maintained their unbeaten run in the Hopman Cup mixed teams' tennis event in Perth, Australia, with a 2-1 victory over Romania yesterday to secure a place in the final against United States.

Wayne Ferreira, the world No 10, guided South Africa into the final today when he levelled the tie with a 7-6, 7-6 victory over Adrian Voinea and then combined with Amanda Coetzer to win the doubles.

The South African pair will play Chanda Rubin and Justin Gimelstob in the final.

Winning crew

Sailing: The Great Britain Paralympic gold medal-winning crew of Andy Cassell, Tony Downs and Kevin Curtis was announced as the BT/YJA Yachtsmen of the Year for 1996 last night. The young sailor of the year award went to Sally and Jessie Cuthbert, the twin sisters, who won their second consecutive gold medal at the world youth championships in July.

The BT/YJA global achievement award was claimed by Davi Dickson, 18, of Australia, the youngest person to complete a non-stop single-handed circumnavigation.

Pot of gold

Golf: Greg Norman, Sam Torrance, Hisayuki Sasaki and Scott Hoch meet this weekend in a matchplay showdown for $1 million at the finals of the World Championship of Golf in Scottsdale, Arizona. Norman plays Sasaki and Hoch meets Torrance in the semi-finals today.

No-go Gatien

Table tennis: Jean-Philippe Gatien, the former world champion, has pulled out of the English Table Tennis Open, starting at Kettering next Tuesday. Gatien is resting before an intense period of training in France to prepare for the world championships next April in Manchester.

Sunshine break

Hockey: Reading and Southgate are in Barcelona, taking part in the Los Reys International tournament, which is celebrating its centenary. Reading play FC Barcelona in their opening game today, and Southgate start against Polo Barcelona.

HOCKEY

Australians pin hopes of success on young

By Sydney Friskin

DON HICKS, the manager of the Australian team, is confident of success at the DTZ Midlands international indoor tournament to be played today and tomorrow at Wyre Forest Glades Arena, Kidderminster, and Perdiswell Sports Centre, Worcester.

"Having won the world team classic at Glasgow in 1991 we have a reputation to maintain and must have an expectation of winning here," Hicks said.

The Australians, who are playing as Canberra, have brought four members of the winning side in 1991, Calvin Boon, Grant Mapp, Anthony Potter and Andrew Jones. "Though the ages range from 22 to 31, overall we have a fairly young but experienced side," Hicks said.

The United States are represented by a team called New York, although only seven of the squad of ten are Americans, including Steve Danielsen, a member of the Olympic outdoor team at Atlanta.

The Scottish challenge is represented by Murray Imperial Metals and Capercailles, the Scottish national team. Other contenders from the home countries are Swansea, the Welsh indoor champions, Barford Tigers, who were the winners last year, Old Loughtonians, St Albans, East Grinstead, Stourport, Firebrands, Beeston and Kidderminster. Barford Tigers, however, are handicapped by the loss of Amarjit Degun, who is out of action with a broken hand.

FOR THE RECORD

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

NEW ORLEANS: Cotton Bowl: Florida 52 Florida State 20.

BASKETBALL

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Newcastle 106 Hemel and Watford 87.
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Charlotte 107 Dallas 97; Cleveland 103 Phoenix 94; Detroit 99 Boston 87; Miami 101 New Jersey 91; Orlando 96 Toronto 94; Washington 90 New York 82; Houston 96 Portland 112; San Antonio 83 Utah 80; Seattle 98 Philadelphia 82; Sacramento 83 LA Lakers 90.

BOWLS

YETTON TROPHY: Third round: Darlington 103 Thornaby 62; Blackpool NH 76 Cumbria 87; Selby 81 Hull 72; Lincoln 57 Boston 104; Leicester 83 Gedling 58; March 97 Huntingdon and Godmanchester 91; St Neots 81 Kingsthorpe 59; County Arts 93 North Walsham 70; Manns 79 Norfolk 78; Sudbury 102 Mid-Suffolk 60; Tilbury 73 Essex County 74; Tye Green 109 Cheshunt 52; Picketts Lock 77 Mansfield 78; Desborough 87 Gosling 76; Stevenage 81 Harpa 70; Bentham 85 Westlecot 75; Croydon 71 Sutton 76; Egham 93 Camberley 59; Wey Valley 75 Loddon Vale 75 (Wey Valley qualify on extra end); Mote Park 104 Oyster 89; Dartford Stone Lodge 85 Royal Tunbridge Wells 90; Wealden 72 Adur 83; Preston 102 King Alfred 53; Solent 78 Atherley 107; Dolphin 91 Bournemouth 83; Northavon 58 Nailsea 92; Woodspring 75 British Cellophane 72; Bodmin 70 Plymouth Civil Service 87.

CRICKET

SUPERSPORT SERIES (first day of four): Durban: Natal 282 (D M Benkenstein 100, N C Johnson 50); Free State 16-1 Port Elizabeth: Western Province 150-1 (D L Haynes 66 not out) v Eastern Province
SHEFFIELD SHIELD (first day of four): Adelaide: New South Wales 282-5 (C Richards 76) v South Australia. Perth: Victoria 322-9 (R P Larkin 104, I J Harvey 55) v Western Australia.

CRESTA RUN

ST MORITZ: Swiss championship: 1, R Hug (Switz) 126.34sec; 2, W Theler (Switz) 126.89; 3, M Colombo (It) 127.16.

DARTS

PURFLEET: Red Band world championships: Group G: S Burgess (Eng) bt R Harrington (Eng) 3-2. Quarter-finals: P Evison (Eng) bt J Harvey (Scot) 5-3, P Taylor (Eng) bt K Deller (Eng) 5-1.

FOOTBALL

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Rangers 3 Celtic 1.
POSTPONED: Jewson Eastern Counties League: Gorleston v Lowestoft. FAI Harp Lager National League: Shamrock Rovers v Finn Harps.

ICE HOCKEY

SUPERLEAGUE: Ayr 4 Sheffield 5, Bracknell 6 Basingstoke 3.
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Hartford 4 Boston 5 (OT), New Jersey 1 Pittsburgh 6; NY Rangers 4 NY Islanders 3; Chicago 2 Phoenix 4; St Louis 2 Montreal 2 (OT). Colorado 3 Calgary 2; Vancouver 4 Los Angeles 3; San Jose 1 Philadelphia 4.

SKIING

REIT IM WINKL, Germany: World Cup Nordic combined team sprint (after two jumps and 15km cross country): 1, H Manninen and J Mantila (Fin) 218.5pts in jump, 35min 1.9sec cross-country time; 2, B Engen Vik and H Skard (Nor) 224.8, 3.2sec back; 3, C Beier and M Stecher (Austria) 231.5, 1.34.3; 4, T Nurmela and K Manninen (Fin) 196.3, 1.47.8; 5, J Deimel and S Koch (Ger) 215.0, 1.49.5.
SESTRIERE: Exhibition slalom: 1, T Sykora (Austria) 1min 18.08sec; 2, T Stangassinger (Austria) 1.19.59; 3, T Stiansen (Nor) 1.19.91; 4, F Simond (Fr) 1.20.10; 5, F C Jagge (Nor) 1.20.33.
MARIBOR, Slovenia: Women's World Cup Alpine giant slalom: 1, S Panzanini (It) 2min 34.74sec (1:19.40 and 1:15.34); 2 equal, D Compagnoni (It) 2:34.82 (1:18.99 and 1:15.83) and A Wachter (Austria) 2:34.82 (1:19.19 and 1:15.63); 4, U Hrovat (Slovenia) 2:35.23 (1:19.15 and 1:16.08); 5, M Ertl (Ger) 2:35.50 (1:19.81 and 1:15.69); 6, K Seizinger (Ger) 2:35.55 (1:20.01 and 1:15.54); 7, S Schuster (Austria) 2:35.67 (1:19.73 and 1:15.94); 8, K Roten (Switz) 2:35.70 (1:19.09 and 1:16.61); 9, A Galindo (Sp) 2:35.81 (1.19.92 and 1:15.89); 10, M Fortkord (Swe) 2:35.94 (1:19.77 and 1:16.17). World Cup overall standings: 1, P Wiberg (Swe) 618pts; 2, Seizinger 534; 3, H Gerg (Ger) 429; 4, Compagnoni 380; 5, Wachter 365. Giant slalom standings: 1 equal, Panzanini and Seizinger 200pts; 3 equal, Compagnoni and Wachter 160; 5, Hrovat 122. Nations' Cup standings: 1, Austria 4,118pts; 2, Italy 2,405; 3, Switzerland 2,105; 4, France 1,906; 5, Germany 1,719.

SNOOKER

BIRMINGHAM: Liverpool Victoria charity challenge: First round (England unless stated): A McManus (Scot) bt D Morgan (Wales) 5-1; K Doherty (Ire) bt S Davis 5-4; J Parrott bt J White 5-2. Quarter-finals: P Ebdon bt Doherty 5-2; McManus bt J Higgins (Scot) 5-4.

SQUASH

SHEFFIELD: Commercial Union British junior open championships: Drysdale Cup (boys under-19) First round (selected results): A Fazy (Egypt) bt J Smith (Yorkshire) 9-1, 9-1, 9-3; M Eggenberger (Switz) bt B O'Hora (Ire) 9-5, 9-0, 9-3; K Elmitkhaw (Egypt) bt M Clover (Sussex) 9-1, 9-0, 9-2; G Schedlbauer (Austria) bt N Duke (Wales) 9-0, 9-5, 2-9, 9-5; Shamsul Islam Khan (Pak) bt A Holderegger (Switz) 9-8, 9-3, 9-7; L Jemmett (Essex) bt H Kaoud (Middlesex) 9-3, 9-6, 9-4; A Stevenson (Yorkshire) bt L Czaska (Austria) 7-9, 9-5, 9-0, 9-3; Ong Beng Hee (Malaysia) bt I Hilton (Durham and Cleveland) 9-2, 4-9, 9-0, 9-6; O Tuominen (Fin) bt R Bhattacharya (India) 0-9, 9-1, 9-0, 9-4; J Russell (Kent) bt M Diaa (Egypt) 9-2, 9-2, 9-2; J Aho (Fin) bt P Hornsby (Lincolnshire) 1-9, 9-7, 3-9, 9-7, 9-6; A Shabana (Egypt) bt T Ninimaki (Fin) 9-0, 9-4, 9-5.

TENNIS

PERTH: Hopman Cup: Group B: Switzerland bt Germany 3-0 (Switzerland names first): M Hingis bt P Begerow 6-1, 6-1; M Rosset bt B Karbacher 7-6, 7-6; Rosset and Hingis bt Karbacher and Begerow 7-5, 6-1); South Africa bt Romania 2-1 (South Africa names first: A Coetzer lost to I Spirlea 7-5, 4-6, 1-6; W Ferreira bt A Voinea 7-6, 7-6; Ferreira and Coetzer bt Voinea and Spirlea 4-6, 6-1, 6-4).
DOHA: Men's tournament: Second round: T Muster (Austria) bt C Ruud (Nor) 6-2, 3-6, 7-5. Quarter-finals: S Bruguera (Sp) bt P Korda (Cz) 6-1, 2-6, 6-3; H Arazi (Mor) bt M Larsson (Swe) 7-6, 7-6; J Courier (US) bt Muster 6-3, 7-5; T Henman (GB) bt M Gustafsson (Swe) 6-3, 7-6.
ADELAIDE: Men's tournament: Quarter-finals: M Tillstrom (Swe) bt A Cherkasov (Russ) 6-2, 6-4; T Woodbridge (Aus) bt A O'Brien (US) 6-4, 6-4; J Tarango (US) bt J Bjorkman (Swe) 6-1, 6-7, 7-6; S Draper (Aus) bt K Kucera (Slovakia) 6-4, 7-5.
AUCKLAND: Women's tournament: Semi-finals: J Wiesner (Austria) bt E Wagner (Ger) 6-2, 6-1; M Maruska (Austria) bt T Tanasugarn (Thai) 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.
HOPE ISLAND, Australia: Women's tournament: Quarter-finals: E Likhovtseva (Russ) bt R McQuillan (Aus) 3-6, 6-3, 7-6; A Sugiyama (Japan) bt S Appelmans (Bel) 6-2, 3-6, 7-6; A G Sidot (Fr) bt A Carlsson (Swe) 6-2, 6-2.

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm) L	Depth (cm) U	Conditions Piste	Conditions Off/p	Runs to resort	Weather (5pm)	°C	Last snow
AUSTRIA								
Obergurgl	40	140	good	varied	fair	fine	2	26/12
(Some exposed pistes hard-packed, otherwise good skiing)								
Söll	20	60	fair	varied	icy	cloud	1	24/12
(Some pistes good others hard with icy patches)								
St Anton	45	180	good	moguls	icy	sun	2	23/12
(Enjoyable skiing but hard/icy patches showing)								
FRANCE								
Alpe d'Huez	115	260	good	powder	good	cloud	1	2/1
(Excellent piste skiing but windy at altitude)								
Flaine	85	240	good	varied	good	cloud	3	2/1
(Great skiing everywhere: milder weather)								
Méribel	65	140	good	varied	fair	fine	3	1/1
(Plenty of good skiing: mogul fields building)								
La Plagne	100	190	good	varied	good	fair	2	2/1
(Great skiing on firm, crisp snow: everything open)								
Val Thorens	160	240	good	crusty	good	snow	3	3/1
(High winds and snowfall causing difficult skiing)								
ITALY								
Cervinia	180	360	good	varied	good	cloud	0	2/1
(Great skiing but tricky visibility)								
Cortina	70	140	good	powder	good	fair	1	2/1
(Fresh snow at all levels: outlook excellent)								
Livigno	140	240	good	varied	good	sun	5	2/1
(Wonderful skiing conditions everywhere)								
SWITZERLAND								
Mürren	60	180	fair	varied	icy	fohn	0	30/12
(Mixed conditions with milder air but snow forecast)								
Verbier	50	190	fair	varied	worn	sun	4	2/1
(Generally good, best away from main pistes)								
Wengen	35	100	good	varied	fair	cloud	1	30/12
(High winds at altitude, piste skiing still good)								
Zermatt	50	260	good	heavy	fair	fair	1	2/1
(Some high pistes windblown: good snow available)								

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L - lower slopes; U - upper.

FOOTBALL

Sheringham injury adds to Spurs' troubles

By David Maddock and Russell Kempson

AS PROSPECTS go, visiting the FA Cup holders in the third round of the competition is never a particularly inviting one. For Tottenham Hotspur, the statistics — and the form book for that matter — suggest that such an excursion tomorrow will be fairly futile.

Manchester United, the holders, are the undisputed masters of the competition under Alex Ferguson, their manager. In ten years at Old Trafford, he has dominated the Cup, winning it on three occasions and reaching the final a fourth time.

Worse for a Tottenham side already seriously undermined by a 7-1 defeat at Newcastle United last week, is the impressive statistic that Ferguson has never failed at the first hurdle in the FA Cup and only twice has he failed to reach at least the fifth round.

Compounding matters, Tottenham's chances of victory receded further yesterday when Teddy Sheringham, the England striker, damaged an ankle in a collision with Espen Baardsen, the reserve goalkeeper, in training. "It was a freak incident and is a massive blow for us," Gerry Francis, the Tottenham manager, said.

"Teddy went in for a challenge with Espen and just turned the ankle. It didn't look too bad at the time but we've had the scans back and he's out for three weeks. I haven't got a front line at the moment."

Tottenham are definitely without Chris Armstrong, Darren Anderton, Gary Mabbutt and John Scales. Steffen Iversen has a bad cold, Sol Campbell has an ankle injury and Rory Allen has a strained back. Francis has been forced to draft Danny Hill, James Clapham and Neil Fenn into the squad.

Ferguson may be more intent on securing a trophy with a more exotic flavour, the European Cup, and, even on the eve of the competition, he made it clear that the FA Cup is a poor third on his list of priorities. He did, though, reiterate a passion for the domestic competition that will ensure no let-up.

"Most countries in Europe don't place any emphasis on winning their cup, but here it is a romantic, historic competition," he said. "The fact is that it will be a major achievement for us to win any trophy this season and, if we lift the FA Cup, then we'll be delighted."

Liverpool, the beaten finalists last season, are the most obvious threat to the holders. They have what appears a straightforward third-round tie at home to Burnley made, it seems, a little easier by an untimely dispute in the visiting camp.

Kurt Nogan, the club's leading goalscorer, has been dropped from the squad after demanding a 25 per cent pay rise to take his wages to £1,000 a week. "I have to look at the whole club and I can't be giving players wages only a few first division clubs pay," Adrian Heath, the Burnley manager, said. "It is important for the club that I make this stand."

Liverpool will rest Robbie Fowler, who has been suffering with an ankle problem, and will also lose Neil Ruddock to a hamstring injury. It is not all bad news for the Anfield club, however, with Jamie Redknapp only a week away from fitness after a month out with injury.

Gareth Southgate, the Aston Villa centre back, will miss the tie against Notts County tomorrow, if it gets the go-ahead after an early-morning pitch inspection, but will make his comeback against Newcastle United in the FA Carling Premiership next Saturday. He has been out since the end of November because of ankle ligament damage.

Southgate will have a month in which to prove his fitness to Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, before the group two World Cup qualifying game against Italy at Wembley on February 12.

Middlesbrough, who play Chester City this afternoon, have taken on Mirko Taccola, the Napoli defender, for a two-week trial. Taccola, 26, a centre half, will cost around £600,000 if Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, decides to make the move permanent.

"I've seen him play against AC Milan and Juventus this season and now I can have a closer look," Robson said. "He is strong in the air and a good man-to-man marker. Hopefully, he can play a reserve game and we'll monitor things and see how it goes."

Small wonders thrive in expansive times

ROB HUGHES

Weekend View

What is a man, and why, in football, must we consider him genetically challenged if he stands less than 6ft tall and weighs in at around 10st? At Chelsea, Gianfranco Zola, when he reaches his full height, can look his player-manager, Ruud Gullit, in the Adam's apple. But anyone who saw much of the demanding Christmas and new year programme would be hard pushed to name a more competitive individual, a more influential match-winner, than the 5ft 5in Sardinian.

He stands equal to Juninho and Maradona, an inch taller than Aston Villa's 5ft 4in bantam, Alan Wright. And all of them would slightly dwarf Jose Domingues, the Portuguese winger who played for Birmingham City during the course of the 1994/95 season.

One can scarcely recall a match in which Zola has failed to leave his imprint. With each performance this manikin lightens the soul, epitomises the essence of spectator sport in that he leaves those who watch him a little more in love with the game.

A special man, gifted in both feet, he proves that it is the size of an athlete's brain that counts and technique rather than physique. He has a wit, too. Asked the other day whether he minds towing a marker so close that he can feel the opponent's breath, he smiled and said in faltering English: "No, but I prefer my wife."

And, pressed about the physical intimidation of some English defenders, he responds: "If there is a problem I call for Mark Hughes. I say: 'Marco, come here!' Then there is no problem."

No problem in the English game, but Italy discarded him when Parma chose to say that Serie A was getting tougher, that Zola lacked the physical presence to withstand its demands.

A mistake, methinks, on a par with that made by those who predicted that all Olympic middle-distance champions would have to be built like Alberto Juantorena, of Cuba, a giant who devoured the track with a nine-foot stride ... until along came injuries implicit in such a body mass. And along came Seb Coe, small and slender and faster, to eclipse Juantorena's times.

Students of English football should not be surprised. Those who coached the long ball, who believed that might was right, overlooked Alan Ball, the fiery redhead of the 1966 World Cup, who had been advised in his youth to seek a job at a riding stable. They overlooked Billy Bremner, John Giles and Bobby Collins, the combative minnows of Leeds United, who few physically abused.

And, as a corollary to the Juantorena-Coe comparison, Chelsea now has in competition for a forward place Zola and Gianluca Vialli. For the moment, Vialli has influenza and is recuperating after a hamstring strain. Italy, which has an obsession with measuring the heart rate, lung capacity and physiology of its sports stars, deemed Vialli the ultimate football specimen, on a par with the great cyclists of the Tour de France.

And what happened? We have seen his power, seen his combative drive and his extraordinary scope. But also he has been lost to the game for month after month because of injuries, a persistently broken bone in the foot for example, which suggest that man was never intended to play football, with all that heart and strength and sinew.

Taking up the theme, Dr Rudy Gittens, a Canadian orthopaedic surgeon, has concluded a study for Fifa which asked him to investigate whether it is true that footballers, like the world population, are getting bigger, taller, heavier.

"Will we indeed have to change the height of the goalposts? Might we even have to make the tunnels to the pitch higher?" Dr Gittens asks whimsically. There have been many knocking at Fifa's door asking for enlargement of the goals in response to the belief that goalkeepers are getting bigger and goals becoming fewer.

The doctor concludes, after studying the 352 players of the 1974 World Cup, and the 528 who played in the World Cup of 1994, that there is an apparent trend towards taller footballers. But he asks whether this is because players selected for their countries are chosen because the coaches deem size to be so important, rather than because players are naturally getting bigger.

The study does, however, present some interesting physical statistics. Brazil's chosen players, though led by the diminutive strike-force of Romario and Bebeto, players of stealth and quickness rather than force, increased in height by almost ten centimetres (4in) in 20 years, and expanded from 70.9kg to 76.5kg (12st).

However, the Latin players, both of South America and notably of Spain, remained on the highest levels of skill, but markedly on the lowest for height and weight. Spain, averaging just over 5ft 6in per man, nevertheless went further in 1994, were far more pleasing on the eye, than the most muscular team around, Norway.

And, since we talk so much of the physical attributes of the Germans, it is noticeable that they are in the mid-section of the height table, averaging 5ft 9½in.

What is noticeable, in a separate calibration, is that the body mass, assessing the true fitness of players, has increased on all continents, specifically among the Brazilians.

So, with Europe tallest and heaviest, with North America next, then Africa, then Asia and finally South America, the tables need to be turned on their heads to acknowledge that, Germany aside, it has been Argentina and Brazil, the little big people, dominating our game.

Keep on running, Gianfranco, don't let the doubts weigh you down.

Zola signals his delight after poaching another goal for Chelsea. Photograph: Gary M Prior / ALLSPORT

Burnley fired by Heath's Anfield success

By Peter Ball

THE week of the third round of the FA Cup is traditionally greeted by managers and players from the smaller clubs announcing that, come what may, they are going to enjoy their day out at the likes of Old Trafford and St James' Park. No such sentiments at Turf Moor this week, though, as Burnley prepared for their visit to Anfield today.

"I've never gone along with this nonsense about 'it's a day out for everybody'," Adrian Heath, Burnley's tyro manager, said. "The supporters will only enjoy their day out if we do well. I'm going there because I want us to be competitive — and do well."

Liverpool's home form of late gives reason for optimism, however, if Burnley can keep their play tight and frustrate Liverpool. Unlike his players — with five home-produced youngsters testifying to Burnley's re-building programme — Heath has some experience of success at Anfield from his days with Everton.

"We had a spell of about four seasons when we never lost at Anfield," he said. "Mind, I could go there with a bit more confidence with Everton than I can with Burnley. But we've got to go there to be professional, be difficult, be hard to break down.

"I know it's hard — if you go there and you concede early-on, they can make it a long, arduous 90 minutes. If they are on top of you, Liverpool can win by eight or nine."

But even if Burnley get a pasting, there will be some consolation for Heath and the 7,000 supporters lucky enough to get tickets before the "sold" signs went up at Turf Moor — the financial rewards. "I don't know how much we'll end up with, but it'll be enough for me to buy a player if I want to, and that's a big difference," Heath said.

Promotion rather than a cup run is Heath's priority. Burnley's ground is already equipped for FA Carling Premiership football; the team is among the pack chasing promotion from the Nationwide League second division — a sign of the impact Heath has made in his first managerial job. Last season, they were struggling against relegation for most of the time.

Heath: Everton old boy

"In an ideal world, I would have stayed at Sheffield United with Howard Kendall for a couple of years," Heath said. "I wouldn't have left for any other club, but I had a fantastic three years here as a player, a great relationship with the supporters. It has under-achieved for some time, now, there is a chance here. If we are doing well we would regularly get 20,000 crowds.

"It's a strange town — you never see anybody who supports another team. If you see a kid in town, he supports Burnley, not Manchester United, Everton or Liverpool. They've all got Burnley strip on. We've got a terrific thriving community programme, the club is a real focus for the community. If we do it on the pitch, the rest will follow."

Heath, though, is discovering the realities of management, particularly as one of the 'have-nots'. Burnley are a big club in the second division, and would be in the first, but as Heath has already become aware, there are now two football nations, with the gap ever more difficult to bridge.

"We've got to get up this year, or next year at the latest, because the longer you wait, the greater the gap grows," he said. "Premiership clubs are guaranteed £10.6 million next year; it means that a club like Coventry, because they were in the Premiership when Sky came in, have paid £20 million for players over four years.

"They will have to redistribute this money better or it will end up like Spain, where you know one of two clubs is going to win the league."

That, probably, is what the big Premiership clubs would like. This afternoon, though, Burnley will do their best to cause the downfall of one of those giants.

Yorkshire hand on FA tiller

HOWARD Wilkinson, the former Leeds United manager, will be appointed technical director of the Football Association on Monday (Russell Kempson writes). In this newly-created post, Wilkinson, a Yorkshireman, will work closely with Glenn Hoddle, the England coach.

Wilkinson, 53, was originally approached about the job last year but rejected it in the belief, ultimately mistaken, that his long-term future was still with Leeds. He also felt that he would miss the day-to-day involvement of working with players.

However, his eight-year tenure at Elland Road ended in dismissal on September 9, and 24 hours later George Graham, the former Arsenal manager and a close friend, replaced him.

Wilkinson's new role is an all-embracing one. His duties will range from overseeing the progress of young players at grass-roots level to assisting Hoddle with the senior international squad.

Arsène Wenger, now the Arsenal manager, Dario Gradi, the long-serving Crewe Alexandra manager, and Frank Clark, who took charge of Manchester City this week, were others who, at one time or another, were on the FA shortlist.

Hayles and pace no fun for City

David Powell on the Stevenage striker with a point to prove at St Andrew's

When they talk about Hayles and pace in the Vauxhall Conference, it is not usually funny. Defeat is never easy to take laughing and it will come as no surprise to those who have been on the wrong end of Barry Hayles's speed and finishing if he cracks a huge joke at Birmingham City's expense today.

Hayles spent two weeks on trial at St Andrew's 18 months ago but was not taken on and returned to Stevenage Borough, where he went on to become the Conference's top scorer last season and player of the year. He returns in the FA Cup third round intent on having the last laugh. "I have got a point to prove going back there," Hayles said this week.

The FA Cup needs Hayles to deliver his lines. The competition, as reliant on the small clubs supplying the romance as it is on the big ones reaching Wembley, has not had a third round winner from the non-League ranks in either of the past two seasons. Romance? There has not even been a distant smell of roses: the six minnow clubs who have made the last 64 in that time have failed to conjure a goal between them.

The Cup has waited long enough for its next non-League FA Cup goalscoring legend, six years since Tim Buzaglo recorded a hat-trick in Woking's 4-3 win away to West Bromwich Albion. The Leatherhead Lip (Chris Kelly), Ronnie Radford, Buzaglo ... Hayles next? Paul Fairclough, the Stevenage manager, gives the impression that we should expect it. "Hayles could play premier division football now," Fairclough insisted.

Hayles's 29 goals last season helped Stevenage to the Conference title. This season he has 14, though he spent most of the first two months of the season sidelined with injury. "He has got great body strength and sucks players in," Fairclough said. "Once he is away you will not catch him. There are plenty of players who can knock the ball 30 yards and run after it, but Hayles can run with the ball, which is reminiscent of what George Best used to do."

Stevenage rejected a £200,000 offer from Bristol Rovers for Hayles this season, since when he has signed a two-year contract. Only three seasons ago he was playing for Willesden Hawkeye in the Spartan League and was a left back when Fairclough spotted him. When Fairclough went to watch Willesden play, it was to see Phil Simpson, now with Barnet, not Hayles. He signed them both.

Appropriately for a man of renowned pace, Hayles was appearing regularly at the Linford Christie Stadium, in west London, Willesden's home ground. "Phil was the one catching the eye," Fairclough recalled. "He got into our first team much quicker than Barry did. Barry came at Christmas and it was not until the following season that he became a feature in the side." Fairclough was quick to move Hayles forward. "He had pace, balance and tricks up his sleeve, but most of all confidence," Fairclough said.

If Birmingham are nervous, it is because they are uncomfortable hosting non-League clubs in the third round. In 1986, they lost at home to Altrincham; in 1994 Kidderminster Harriers beat them at St Andrew's. However, they have conceded only five goals at home in 11 first division matches this season and it is against such resilient defence that Hayles must measure himself.

Stevenage are in rampant form: six goals at Slough on New Year's Day, though only one from Hayles, three against Hayes last Saturday in a match abandoned at half-time. Stevenage are paying the price of a Cup run that started in the first qualifying round. They are five games behind Kidderminster Harriers, the Conference leaders, and have 15 points to catch up.

Hayles, 24, hopes a good performance against Birmingham might lead to interest from Premiership or first division clubs. "In the last round, against Leyton Orient, I did not do myself justice, so am going out to do that against Birmingham," he said.

Fairclough remembers playing for Wealdstone against the Lip. "We remember him for his predictions more than his playing ability — Hayles is a far, far better player than Kelly was," Fairclough said. In 27 years involvement with non-League football, Fairclough has "not seen anybody better."

At Woking they would argue Buzaglo. Yet, soon after his hat-trick against West Bromwich, Buzaglo damaged cruciate ligaments, was out of the game for a year, lost his pace, and is now back where he started: in local football. Hayles hopes for better, echoing his manager's view that he is Premiership standard.

The only guarantee, however, that a match-winner from Hayles at St Andrew's would bring is a place in the fourth round. That and a Gareth Hale-sized smile. How the failed Birmingham trialist would see the funny side.

STEVENAGE COMET

Hayles, leading scorer in the Conference last season

FA CUP THIRD ROUND FORM GUIDE

Possible upsets

Newcastle United have never beaten Charlton Athletic in the FA Cup — both fixtures have gone the way of the Londoners, 2-1 and 4-0. Similarly, Queens Park Rangers have never beaten Huddersfield Town, of the three ties, Rangers' best was a draw but they were beaten in the replay.

Chelsea have only beaten West Bromwich Albion twice in their ten meetings, while Tottenham Hotspur could prove a stumbling block for Manchester United, having lost two of their 12 cup meetings.

Other tricky ties include Nottingham Forest's match with Ipswich Town. Forest have managed one win, one draw and one loss in their previous meetings and West Ham United take a precarious one win, three draws and one loss record to Wrexham.

First-timers

Eight ties pair clubs for the first time in the FA Cup: Chesterfield v Bristol City; Coventry City v Woking; Crewe Alexandra v Wimbledon; Huddersfield Town v York City; Leicester City v Southend United; Stevenage Borough v Birmingham City; Stoke City v Stockport County and Wycombe Wanderers v Bradford City.

How they compare

Home team's full record against visitors

Arsenal v Sunderland
P5, W2, D0, L3, F9, A11
Last meeting: 2-1 (third round, 1990-91)
Blackburn v Oldham
P4, W1, D1, L2, F4, A4
Last meeting: 1-2 (third round replay, 1995-96)
Blackpool v Port Vale
P4, W2, D1, L1, F8, A5
Last meeting: 1-3 (third round replay, 1971-72)
Brentford v Manchester City
P2, W1, D0, L1, F4, A7
Last meeting: 3-1 (fourth round, 1988-89)
Carlisle v Tranmere
P2, W0, D0, L2, F1, A5
Last meeting: 1-2 (third round, 1937-38)
Charlton v Newcastle
P2, W2, D0, L0, F6, A1
Last meeting: 2-1 (third round, 1947-48)
Chelsea v West Bromwich
P10, W2, D4, L4, F11, A13
Last meeting: 1-2 (sixth round, 1968-69)
Crystal Palace v Leeds
P4, W1, D0, L3, F2, A14
Last meeting: 1-0 (fourth round, 1975-76)
Everton v Swindon
P4, W2, D1, L1, F10, A5
Last meeting: 2-1 (fourth round replay, 1976-77)
Gillingham v Derby
P2, W0, D1, L1, F2, A4
Last meeting: 1-3 (est: third-round replay, 1985-86)
Liverpool v Burnley
P12, W5, D4, L3, F12, A7
Last meeting: 1-0 (fourth round replay, 1994-95)
Luton v Bolton
P4, W1, D0, L3, F2, A4
Last meeting: 1-0 (6th round, 1972-73)
Manchester Utd v Tottenham
P12, W2, D5, L5, F15, A21
Last meeting, 0-1 (est: third-round replay, 1979-80)
Middlesbrough v Chester
P1, W1, D0, L0, F5, A2
Last meeting: 5-2 (third round, 1966-67)
Norwich v Sheffield Utd
P4, W2, D1, L1, F8, A8
Last meeting: 3-2 (6th round, 1988-89)
Nottingham Forest v Ipswich
P3, W1, D1, L1, F8, A4
Last meeting: 3-0 (third round, 1988-89)
Notts County v Aston Villa
P12, W3, D4, L5, F21, A23
Last meeting: 0-6 (third round, 1981-82)
Plymouth v Peterborough
P2, W1, D0, L1, F3, A4
Last meeting: 3-2 (second round, 1992-93)
QPR v Huddersfield
P4, W0, D1, L3, F1, A12
Last meeting: 1-2 (third round, 1983-84)
Reading v Southampton
P1, W0, D0, L1, F0, A1
Last meeting: 0-1 (third round, 1987-88)
Sheffield Wednesday v Grimsby
P1, W1, D0, L0, F5, A1
Last meeting: 5-1 (first round, 1912-13)
Stevenage v Birmingham
No previous meetings
Stoke v Stockport
No previous meetings
Watford v Oxford
P2, W0, D1, L1, F2, A3
Last meeting: 1-2 (fourth-round replay, 1970-71)
Wolverhampton v Portsmouth
P4, W2, D1, L1, F9, A7
Last meeting: 3-2 (third-round replay, 1984-85)
Wrexham v West Ham
P5, W1, D3, L1, F4, A4
Last meeting: 0-1 (fourth-round replay, 1991-92)
* Eight ties pit clubs in opposition for the first time.

Cup pedigree

Arsenal: winners (8); Aston Villa: winners (7); Barnsley: winners (1); Birmingham: final; Blackburn: winners (6); Bolton: winners (4); Bradford: winners (1); Brentford: sixth round; Bristol City: final; Burnley: winners (1); Carlisle: fifth round; Charlton: winners (1); Chelsea: winners (1); Chester: fifth round; Chesterfield: fifth round; Coventry: winners (1); Crewe: semi-final; Crystal Palace: final; Derby: winners (1); Everton: winners (5); Gillingham: fifth round; Grimsby: semi-final; Huddersfield: third round; Hudderfield: winners (1); Ipswich: winners (1); Leeds: winners (1); Leicester: final; Liverpool: winners (5); Luton: final; Manchester City: winners (4); Manchester Utd: winners (9); Middlesbrough: sixth round; Newcastle: winners (6); Norwich: semi-final; Nottingham Forest: winners (2); Notts County: winners (1); Oldham: semi-final; Oxford Utd: sixth round; Peterborough: sixth round; Plymouth: semi-final; Port Vale: semi-final; Portsmouth: winners (1); QPR: final; Reading: semi-final; Sheffield Utd: winners (4); Sheffield Wed: winners (3); Southampton: winners (1); Southend: fifth round; Stevenage: third round; Stockport: fifth round; Stoke: semi-final; Sunderland: winners (2); Swindon: semi-final; Tottenham: winners (8); Tranmere: fifth round; Watford: final; West Bromwich Albion: winners (5); West Ham: winners (3); Wimbledon: winners (1); Woking: fourth round; Wolverhampton: winners (4); Wrexham: sixth round; Wycombe: third round; York: semi-final.

(Figure in brackets denotes number of times won)

Julian Desborough

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RUGBY UNION

Leicester lifted to higher plane by French connection

By David Hands, Rugby Correspondent

IT IS not stretching the analogy too far to take Leicester's *Heineken Cup* semi-final with Toulouse at a freezing Welford Road today as a model for English rugby as a whole. Rightly or wrongly, Leicester have been regarded as a conservative club in recent years, just as England have played largely conservative rugby at international level.

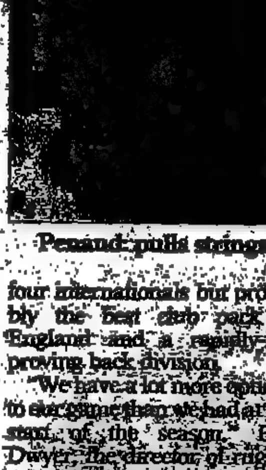
Can the Tigers change their stripes? Can England play the fluent, destructured rugby they have talked about yet have failed so far to produce, save in limited patches? That depends upon how long one believes the process of change should take but the signs are there this season that Leicester have made distinct progress away from the side dominated by Dean Richards and his combative pack.

The meeting today with the French champions — which is dependent on a 9am inspection by the referee, Jim Fleming — is about far more than a place in the European final, delighted though the Leicester players would be to offer that to their exultant supporters. It is about an English side — others had confidently expected that side to be Bath, or perhaps Harlequins or Wasps — coping with the best the *northern hemisphere* can offer and yet preserving the best characteristics of the domestic game.

This assumes that the game is given the go-ahead. Brive, who host the other semi-final *tomorrow* against *Cardiff*, found rain falling yesterday and were confident the weather would be no bar; by comparison Leicester officials mounted a big operation, *installing a hot-air balloon over their playing surface, at a cost* of £8,000.

Leicester had hoped the balloon would be in place earlier but a rip held up the effect of two giant heaters *pumping* one and a quarter million [illegible] onto the [illegible]. Further heaters were due to be brought in to avoid disappointing a [illegible] crowd [illegible] five [illegible] games being screened in England, Wales, France, Italy and North America [illegible] an overcrowded [illegible].

All being well, Toulouse will field a team including ten internationals, among them Emile Ntamack and Thomas Castaignède, who has not played for [illegible] weeks because of [illegible] and injuries. Against the cup holders Leicester parade



Penaud: pulls strings

four internationals but probably the best club pack in England and a rapidly improving back division.

"We have a lot more options to our game than we had at the start of the season," Bob Dwyer, the director of rugby, said. "We are playing well enough to be in with a shout. Toulouse have some very talented players."

But Dwyer and Richards, his captain, acknowledge that the Heineken Cup has lifted players to a higher plane, the belief of Leicester's team has been [illegible] coincidence that should have happened since they [illegible] France against Pau at the end of October. "I think this game epitomises the change to professional rugby," Peter Wheeler, the club's chief executive, said.

"The preparation of both teams has been taken to a different level and the level of competition will be not far short of an international — perhaps even higher than some we have seen recently." But at least club officials no longer perceive, simplistically, European competition as being a panacea for all domestic ills.

Wheeler and his opposite number at Cardiff, Gareth Davies, see a healthy domestic league and cup structure as fundamental to European rugby. "The Heineken Cup is a great concept, a real crowd puller with great television appeal," Davies said. "But we must get the domestic game right, then get Europe up and running."

For now Davies will be delighted if his team can emulate last year's achievement and reach the European final. To do so they must beat a Brive team that has played outstanding rugby at home and has Alain Penaud pulling the tactical strings.

Brive have made changes to the back five forwards and there is no room for the former Cardiff lock, Tony Rees, who has progressed to the Emerging Wales XV on the back of Brive's European campaign.

LEICESTER: J Liley; S Hackney, B Potter, W Greenwood, L Lloyd; R Liley, A Healey; G Rowntree, R Cockerill, D Garforth, J Wells, M Johnson, M Poole, N Back, D Richards.

TOULOUSE: S Ougier; E Ntamack, M Marfaing, T Castaignède, D Berty; C Deylaud, J Cazalbou; C Califano, P Soula, H Jordana, D Lacroix, H Miorin, F Belot, R Sonnes, S Dispagne.

Referee: J Fleming (Scotland).

BRIVE: S Viars; G Fabre, C Lamaison, D Venditti, S Carrat; A Penaud, P Carbonneau; D Casadei, L Travers, R Crespy, L van der Linden, G Ross, E Alegret, G Kacala, T Labrousse or L Bonnes.

CARDIFF: J Thomas; S Hill, M Hall, L Davies, N Walker; J Davies, R Howley; A Lewis, J Humphreys, L Mustoe, H Taylor, J Wakeford, D Jones, O Jones, E Lewis.

Referee: [illegible] (Ireland).

Wood is not underestimating the size of Ireland's task against Italy at Lansdowne Road this afternoon

Wood takes Italian job seriously

By Karl Johnston

THE scene in the Ireland team hotel after the match against Italy on the night of May 6, 1995 conjured up images of mourning. The free-wheeling Italians had outplayed the ponderous Irish to the lively tune of 22-12 in Treviso, scoring the only try of the match in the process, to record their first win over five-nations opposition.

Ominously, nine of that victorious Italy side will again face Ireland at Lansdowne Road this afternoon, while a tenth player, Stefano Bordon, came on as a replacement in Treviso. *The nine are well distributed throughout the* team today. They are Paolo Vaccari, then at full back, now on the right wing, Marcello Cuttitta, Diego Dominguez and Alessandro Troncon at *half* back, Massimo Cuttitta, *Carlo Orlandi and Franco* Propertzi in the front row, Julian Gardner and Orazio Arancio in the back row.

Admittedly, this is a much-changed Ireland team, one that includes *just five survivors from that evening of* trauma. They are Jonathan Bell, Paul Burke, Anthony Foley, Gabriel Fulcher and Nick Popplewell. But Keith Wood, the Ireland captain, *was yesterday under no illusions* about the challenge that his side will face this afternoon. "I think Italy were a little intimidated when they played England at Twickenham, but they performed well *against the Scots," he said.*

"I don't believe that they are not up to taking part in an extended five nations' championship. The difference in standards between Italy, Ireland, Scotland and Wales is very fine, *and if we underestimate our opponents now,* we do so at our peril."

After defeat by Australia last month, the two changes — one of them enforced because of Jim Staples's injury — *might be regarded by the* pessimistic of heart as somewhat meagre. The debut of Eric Miller at open-side flanker may be a help, for he is larger and heavier than Denis McBride, *though the latter's experience,* tenacity and speed to the break-down ball may well be missed.

Many observers believe that the in-form Eric Elwood would be a better bet at stand-*off half than Paul Burke,* given the team's attacking limitations in midfield. But Pat Whelan, the manager, yesterday made it clear that Elwood was not an option, never mind his four-day sojourn *with the 37-man squad in the Algarve:* "Burke and David Humphreys were the only outside halves in contention," the manager said.

IRELAND: C M P O'Shea (London Irish), J A Topping (Ballymena), J C Bell (Northampton), M C McCall (Dungannon), D J Crotty (Garryowen), P A Burke (Bristol), S C McIvor (Garryowen); N J Popplewell (Newcastle), K G M Wood (Harlequins, captain), P S Wallace (Saracens), D S Corkery (Bristol), G M Fulcher (London Irish), J W Davidson (London Irish), E R P Miller (Leicester), A G Foley (Shannon). Replacements: D G Humphreys (London Irish), N A Hogan (Terenure College), W D McBride (Malone), P S Johns (Saracens), P Flavin (Blackrock College), A T H Clarke (Northampton).

ITALY: J Pertile (Roma); P Vaccari (Calvisano), S Bordon (Rovigo), A Stoica (Milan), Marcello Cuttitta (Milan), D Dominguez (Milan), A Troncon (Treviso); Massimo Cuttitta (Milan, captain), C Orlandi (Milan), F Properzi (Milan), J Gardner (Treviso), G Croci (Milan), W Cristofoletto (Treviso), A Sgorlon (Treviso), O Arancio (Milan). Replacements: A Moscardi (Treviso), A Castellani (Treviso), C Checchinato (Treviso), G Guidi (Livorno), F Mazzariol (Treviso), N Mazzucato (Padova).

Referee: R Davies (Wales).

Volunteers help Bath to plan warm welcome for Pienaar

By Christopher Irvine

VOLUNTEERS were manning ten industrial heaters at the Recreation Ground, Bath, last night in an attempt to ensure that Francois Pienaar plays his first game for Saracens this afternoon. Pienaar, who turned 30 this week, missed out when Saracens were forced to postpone the home fixture against Orrell last week.

Despite sub-zero temperatures overnight, Bath officials were hoping that their £50,000 investment in pitch covers and heaters for *the Courage Clubs Championship first* division match would not be in vain. Injury has denied Pienaar a potential re-acquaintance with Mike Catt, who once described South Africa's World Cup-winning captain as an "average player".

Ireland's match against Italy means that the Saracens pack is minus Paddy Johns and Paul Wallace. Phil de Glanville, the England captain, returns for Bath.

In preferring rugby to cricket, Liam Botham, 19, relieved some of his burden at being the son of a cricketing icon. Not that his league debut at outside centre for West Hartlepool, at home to Bristol, is without pressure. With the bottom four clubs automatically relegated, Bristol and Gloucester are very much part of the demotion equation.

The return of Robert Jones, at scrum half, after three months is an important boost for Bristol, whose four successive league defeats West Hartlepool *must add to.* Hartlepool, unusually, is one of the few frost-free places in England. Northampton's game at Gloucester was an early casualty.

Unlike Pienaar, Thierry Lacroix, Harlequins' third French recruit, is guaranteed *his debut tomorrow against Wasps, courtesy* of the under-soil heating at Loftus Road. By inflicting Harlequins' fourth successive league defeat, Wasps would move two points clear of Leicester, the leaders this morning on goal difference.

Lacroix is seen as the solution to Harlequins' place-kicking problems. His duel *with Gareth Rees, Wasps' Canada* international, who landed all 18 points to defeat Northampton last week, could be decisive. Va'aiga Tuigamala, who is poised to see out the season with Wasps, is moved back to centre from the wing, where he *encounters Gary Connolly, his Wigan* rugby league colleague, on his penultimate appearance for Harlequins. Robbie Paul, who returns to Bradford Bulls after next Saturday's home visit by Bath, makes a rare start for Harlequins, at full-back.

Orrell have dropped their fight against London Irish's postponement of their league match because they have four players on duty for Ireland. Irish said that Orrell had known of the possibility since Monday and that the decision complied with the RFU regulation permitting a club with three or more players in any international team to call off a domestic game.

TENNIS

Henman on course to reach first tour final

By Our Sports Staff

TIM HENMAN is one victory away from his first ATP Tour final after beating Magnus Gustafsson, of Sweden, 6-3, 7-6 *in the quarter-finals* of the Qatar Open, in Doha yesterday.

He plays Hicham Arazi, of Morocco, in the semi-finals. Arazi beat Magnus Larsson, *of Sweden,* 7-6, 7-6 *in his* quarter-final. The other semi-final will see Jim Courier, of the United States, the former world No 1, take on Sergi Bruguera, of Spain.

Henman *encountered few* problems in taking the first set against Gustafsson, whom he had beaten in straight sets on his fine run to the quarter-*finals at Wimbledon last* year, *breaking the Swede's service* in the fourth game to love with some excellent groundstrokes.

The seventh game proved the hardest of the opening set. *Henman, under severe pressure* on his own service, was taken to deuce, but held his nerve to move into a 5-2 lead and went on to take the set in his next service game.

Gustafsson, celebrating his thirtieth birthday, continued to improve in the second set, which went to a tie-break as Henman, looking to improve his world ranking of 29, lost *his fluency.*

The British No 1, who is the highest-ranked player not seeded for this tournament, battled to keep his momentum against the No 5 seed and survived four break points in a *long fourth game as he struggled* with his first service.

Henman eventually held his service, but the Swede refused to concede defeat, punishing some loose play and some ill-*judged drop shots from his opponent to give himself three* set points at 6-5. Henman, however, saved each of them to force the tie-break.

Showing great character, Henman raced to a 4-1 lead in the tie-break and, as Gustafsson lost his way, the Briton wrapped it up by seven points to three to ensure his place in the last four.

In Auckland, Judith Wiesner *and Marion Maruska ensured an all-Austrian final* to the New Zealand Classic by winning their semi-final matches yesterday. Wiesner, the second seed, overwhelmed Elena Wagner, of Germany, *6-2, 6-1, while Maruska, a* qualifier, beat *Tamarine* Tanasugarn, of Thailand, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3 to reach her first WTA Tour final.

In Adelaide, Mikael Tillstrom, of Sweden, continued his march through the Australian Hardcourt Championships by reaching the semi-finals with a 6-2, 6-4 defeat of Andrei Cherkasov, of Russia.

[illegible] GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated
Pools coupon numbers in brackets
** denotes all-ticket*

FA Cup
Third round
(1) Arsenal v Sunderland
(3) Barnsley v Oldham ... P
(4) Blackburn v Port Vale
(5) Brentford v Manchester City ... P
(6) Carlisle v Tranmere
(7) Chelsea v West Bromwich
(8) Chesterfield v Bristol City ... P
(-) Coventry v Woking ... P
(9) Crewe v Wimbledon ... P
(10) Crystal Palace v Leeds ... P
(11) Gillingham v Derby ... P
(—) Hednesford v York ... P
(12) Leicester v Southend ... P
(13) Liverpool v Burnley
(14) Luton v Bolton ... P
(15) Middlesbrough v Chester
(16) Norwich v Sheffield Utd
(—) Nottingham Forest v Ipswich
(17) Plymouth v Peterborough
(18) QPR v Huddersfield
(19) * Reading v Southampton
(20) Sheffield Wednesday v Grimsby
(—) Stevenage v Birmingham
(at Birmingham City FC)
(21) Stoke v Stockport ... P
(22) Watford v Oxford Utd ... P
(23) * Wolverhampton v Portsmouth
(24) * Wrexham v West Ham

Nationwide League
Second division
(25) Bournemouth v Preston ... P
(26) Bury v Shrewsbury ... P
(—) Walsall v Blackpool ... P

Third division
(—) Barnet v Lincoln ... P
(27) Brighton v Exeter ... P
(28) Cambridge Utd v Northampton ... P
(—) Cardiff v Scunthorpe ... P
(29) Doncaster v Rochdale ... P
(30) Fulham v Swansea ... P
(31) Hereford v Darlington ... P
(32) Hull v Colchester ... P
(33) Leyton Orient v Mansfield
(34) Wigan v Hartlepool ... P

Vauxhall Conference
(—) Farnborough v Altrincham ... P
(—) Halifax v Bromsgrove ... P
(—) Hayes v Dover
(—) Kettering v Morecambe
(—) Kidderminster v Northwich
(—) Southport v Bath
(—) Telford v Stalybridge
(—) Welling v Rushden & Diamonds ... P

Bell's Scottish League
Premier division
(35) Aberdeen v Dunfermline
(36) Celtic v Motherwell
(37) Dundee Utd v Kilmarnock
(38) Hibernian v Rangers
(39) Raith v Hearts

First division
(40) Airdrie v Greenock Morton
(41) East Fife v St Johnstone
(42) Falkirk v Clydebank
(43) Partick v Stirling
(44) St Mirren v Dundee

GILBERT LEAGUE OF WALES: Conwy v Carmarthen Town; Llansantffraid v Bangor City; Rhyl v Connah's Quay. Postponed: Aberystwyth v Ton Pentre; Barry v Caernarfon; Briton Ferry v Porthmadog; Cemaes v Inter Cable-Tel; Cemaes Bay v Welshpool; Cwmbran v Flint Town.

Tennents Scottish Cup
Second round
(—) Ayr v Clyde
(—) Berwick v Rosehearty
(45) Brechin v Livingston ... P
(46) Cowdenbeath v Dumbarton ... P
(—) East Stirling v Brora ... P
(—) Forfar v Alloa
(—) Queen's Park v Gala Fairydean
(47) Ross County v Montrose ... P
(—) Spartans v Arbroath (2.0)
(48) Stenhousemuir v Hamilton
(49) Stranraer v Inverness CT ... P
(—) Whitehill v Queen of South (2.15)

ICIS LEAGUE: Premier division: Aylesbury v Sutton United; Boreham Wood v Yeading; Bromley v Purfleet; Dagenham and Red v St Albans; Harrow v Bishop's Stortford; Hitchin v Oxford City; Staines v Heybridge. Postponed: Carshalton v Dulwich; Grays v Hendon; Yeovil v Enfield. First division: Basingstoke v Walton and Hersham; Berkhamsted v Hampton; Canvey Island v Uxbridge; Croydon v Barton Rovers; Maidenhead United v Bognor Regis; Molesey v Leyton Pennant; Thame v Whyteleafe; Tooting and Mitcham v Chesham; Wokingham v Billericay; Worthing v Abingdon Town. Second division: Banstead v Hungerford; Barking v Leatherhead; Bedford T v Ware; Bracknell v Leighton Town; Chalfont St Peter v Tilbury; Collier Row and Romford v Edgware; Dorking v Egham; Metropolitan Police v Hemel Hempstead; Wembley v Witham; Windsor and Eton v Cheshunt; Wivenhoe v Horsham. Third division: Braintree v Aveley; Camberley v Hertford; Clapton v Lewes; Harlow v Wealdstone; Kingsbury v Hornchurch; Northwood v East Thurrock; Tring v Flackwell Heath.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division: Gravesend and Northfleet v Crawley; Merthyr v Gresley; Nuneaton v Chelmsford; Salisbury v Cambridge City. Postponed: Ashford v Baldock; Burton v Newport AFC; Gloucester v Dorchester; Hastings v Atherstone; Halesowen v Sittingbourne; King's Lynn v Worcester City; Sudbury Tn v Cheltenham. Midland division: Bilston v Moor Green; Grantham v Stourbridge; Ilkeston v Paget R; Raunds T v Evesham; Redditch v Hinckley Town; Shepshed D v Rothwell; Solihull Boro v Corby; Stafford v RC Warwick; Sutton Coldfield Town v Dudley Town; VS Rugby v Tamworth. Southern division: Bashley v St Leonards; Buckingham Town v Fisher London; Erith and Belvedere v Newport (IoW); Fareham v Dartford; Forest Green v Witney; Margate v Waterlooville; Tonbridge Angels v Clevedon; Trowbridge v Cinderford Town; Weston-super-Mare v Havant; Weymouth v Cinderford; Yate v Fleet T.

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Alfreton v Chorley; Barrow v Leek; Blyth Spartans v Knowsley; Colwyn Bay v Boston; Emley v Winsford; Spennymoor v Lancaster. Postponed: Buxton v Accrington Stanley; Gainsborough v Runcorn; Hyde v Guiseley; Marine v Frickley; Witton v Bishop Auckland. First division: Ashton United v Warrington; Atherton LR v Whitley Bay; Curzon Ashton v Stocksbridge PS; Congleton v Great Harwood; Farsley Celtic v Radcliffe; Flixton v Worksop; Harrogate Town v Netherfield; Leigh v Eastwood Town; Matlock Town v Workington. Postponed: Gretna v Bradford Park Avenue; Lincoln United v Droylsden.

WELSH CUP: Fourth round: Postponed: Mostyn Park v Holywell.

ESSEX SENIOR LEAGUE: Premier division: Brentwood v Ford United; Great Wakering Rovers v Bowers United; East Ham United v Hullbridge Sports; Ilford v Sawbridgeworth; Saffron Walden v Burnham Ramblers; Southend Manor v Eton Manor; Stansted v Basildon United.

FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Derry v UCD (7.30). Postponed: Home Farm v Sligo.

LONDON SPARTAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Barkingside v St Margaretsbury; Beaconsfield SYCOB v Woodford; Cockfosters v Brimsdown Res; Hanwell v Harefield; Islington St Marys v Amersham; Ruislip Manor v Brook House; Waltham Abbey v Haringey.

COURAGE COMBINED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Bedfont v Cove; Cobham v Ash; Farnham v Viking Sports; Feltham v Corinthian-Casuals; Godalming and Guildford v Ashford; Hartley Wintney v Chipstead; Merstham v Sandhurst; Raynes Park Vale v Cranleigh; Walton Casuals v Reading; Westfield v Netherne.

MINERVA SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE: Premier division: Arlesey v Biggleswade; Buckingham Athletic v Potters Bar; Harpenden v Letchworth; Milton Keynes v Brache Sparta; Royston v Bedford; Toddington v London Colney; Welwyn Garden v Langford.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division: Backwell v Tiverton; Bideford v Bristol Manor Farm; Bridport v Westbury; Brislington v Chard; Elmore v Torrington; Odd Down v Barnstaple; Paulton R v Chippenham; Taunton v Calne.

JEWSON EASTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Bury Town v Woodbridge; Newmarket v Hadleigh U; Stowmarket v Harwich and Parkeston; Tiptree v March; Warboys v Felixstowe P and T; Walton v Clacton; Wisbech v Halstead.

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: Lymington v Wimborne Town; Andover v Totton; BAT v Aerostructures; Bemerton Heath v Brockenhurst; Christchurch v Cowes Sports; East Cowes v Petersfield; Eastleigh v Bournemouth; Portsmouth v Downton; Thatcham v Whitchurch.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier division: Armthorpe Welfare v Glasshoughton Welfare; Arnold v Liversedge; Ashfield v Pickering; Belper Town v North Ferriby; Brigg Town v Hallam; Maltby MW v Ossett Town; Ossett Albion v Thackley; Pontefract Cols v Hatfield Main; Selby v Denaby; Sheffield v Hucknall.

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Eastbourne Town v Arundel; Horsham YMCA v Hailsham; Langney Sports v Hassocks; Pagham v Ringmer; Portfield v Oakwood; Wick v Three Bridges.

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: First division: Crockenhill v Ramsgate; Faversham v Chatham. First division Cup: First round: Canterbury v Tunbridge Wells; Deal v Beckenham; Furness v Slade Green; Greenwich v Folkestone Invicta; Herne Bay v Woolwich; Hythe v Corinthian; Lordswood v Sheppey; Thamesmead v Cray.

HELLENIC LEAGUE: Premier division: Abingdon United v Lambourn Sports; Bicester v Shortwood; Brackley v North Leigh; Carterton v Swindon Supermarine; Didcot v Banbury; Endsleigh v Almondsbury; Kintbury v Tuffley; Wantage v Burnham.

BANKS'S BREWERY LEAGUE: Premier division: Blowich S v Tividale; Cradley Town v Hill Top R; Darlaston v Gornal Res; Lye Town v Wolverhampton C; Stourport S v Wednesfield; Walsall Wood v Wolverhampton United; Westfields v Brierley Hill T.

OLD BOYS' LEAGUE: Premier division: Cardinal Manning OB v Old Vaughanians; Clapham OX v Glyn OB; Latymer OB v Old Meadonians; Old Aloysians v Old Kingsburians; Old Ignatians v Old Hamptonians.

ARTHURIAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Carthusians v Cholmeleians; Foresters v Chigwellians; Reptonians v Lancing; Wykehamists v Brentwoods.

INTERLINK EXPRESS ALLIANCE: Bloxwich v Bridgnorth; Bloxwich Town v Pershore T; Knypersley V v Boldmere St M; Rushall O v Chasetown; Stapenhill v Oldbury U; Stratford T v Rocester; W Mid Police v Hinckley Athletic; Willenhall v Halesowen H.

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Boston v Wellingborough; Cogenhoe v Long Buckby; Mirrlees Blackstone v Eynesbury; Newport Pagnell v Bourne; Northampton Spencer v Kempston; St Neots v Desborough; Spalding v Potton; S and L Corby v Stamford; Stotfold v Ford Sports; Wootton v Holbeach. Cup: Second round: Olney v St Ives.

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Postponed: Arsenal v Norwich; Charlton v Leyton Orient; Gillingham v Ipswich; Millwall v Chelsea; Portsmouth v Fulham; Southend v West Ham; Tottenham v Cambridge Utd; Watford v Queens Park Rangers. Second division: Postponed: Barnet v Wimbledon; Bournemouth v Swindon; Brentford v Tottenham; Brighton v Oxford Utd; Bristol City v Luton; Bristol Rovers v Southampton; Reading v Colchester; Wycombe v Crystal Palace.

ENDSLEIGH INSURANCE MIDLAND COMBINATION: Premier division: Postponed: David Lloyd v Coventry Sphinx; Handrahan Timbers v Worcester; Highgate v Kenilworth; Meir KA v Knowle; Richmond Swifts v Bilston Community College; Shirley v Massey Ferguson; Southam v Alvechurch; Wellesbourne v Coleshill; West Midland Fire Service v Studley BKL. Cup: Fourth round: Postponed: Bolehall S v Kings Heath.

SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Coleraine v Ards; Crusaders v Glenavon; Glentoran v Cliftonville; Portadown v Linfield. First division: Ballyclare v Omagh; Bangor v Ballymena; Distillery v Carrick; Newry v Larne.

PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE: *Clachnacuddin v Lossiemouth;* Cove v Keith; Deveronvale v Nairn County; Forres Mechanics v Fraserburgh; Fort William v Buckie Thistle; Huntly v Rothes; Wick Academy v Elgin.

SOUTHERN OLYMPIAN LEAGUE: Senior one: Hale End Ath v Parkfield; Nottsborough v Albanian; St Mary's Coll v Southgate County; Witan v Old Finchleians.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Atherton Collieries v Maine Road; Chadderton v Rossendale; Darwen v Burscough; Eastwood H v Salford; Glossop North End v Trafford; Holker Old Boys v Kidsgrove; Nantwich v Blackpool Rovers; Penrith v Vauxhall GM; Prescot Cables v St Helens. Cup: Second round: Bootle v Newcastle Town; Mossley v Clitheroe.

FEDERATION BREWERY NORTHERN LEAGUE: First division: Chester-le-Street v Consett; Crook v Bedlington Terriers; Guisborough v Whickham; Murton v Billingham; RTM Newcastle v South Shields; Seaham Red Star v Stockton; Shildon v Morpeth; Tow Law v Easington; West Auckland v Durham; Whitby v Dunston Federation.

SOUTHERN AMATEUR LEAGUE: First division: *Carshalton v Crouch End Vampires;* Civil Service v South Bank; NatWest Bank v Norsemen; *Old Actonians v Old* Esthameians; Old Parmiterians v Polytechnic; West Wickham v East Barnet OG.

NB: all non-league matches subject to pitch inspections.

HOCKEY

DTZ MIDLAND INDOOR INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT: Group A: *Canberra, Hull, Kidderminster, MIM.* Group B: New York, St Albans, Stourport, Swansea (at Wyre Forest LC, Kidderminster, 9.30). Group C: Firebrands, Harborne, Old Loughtonians, Wiener AC (Austria). Group D: Barford Tigers, Beeston, Capercaillies (Scotland), East Grinstead (at Perdiswell SC, Worcester, 9.30).

MEN'S CLUB MATCHES: Alderley Edge v Bowdon; Bridgnorth v Shrewsbury; Brig v Colwyn Bay; Brooklands v RAF; Chelmsford v Harleston Magpies, Edgbaston v *Blossomfield; Hereford v Cardiff* Isca v Bournemouth, North Staffs v Hampton, Oxford Hawks v City of Oxford; S Bankers v Chesterfield, Whitchurch v West Gloucs; Yeovil v Bath Buccaneers.

WOMEN'S CLUB MATCHES: Atlanta v Wallington; BAC v Bath, Bedford v St Albans 1A; Burgess Hill v Epsom; Bury St Edmunds v Bishop's Stortford; Cambridge City v St Ives; Colwyn Bay v Timperley; Crowborough v Hailsham; Eastcote v Poly; Guildford v Rover Cowley; Harleston v *Dereham,* Hayes v Staines; Hendon v Hemel; Hounslow v NPL; Newport v Weston; Oxford Hawks v Wycombe Rye; Pontypridd v St Fagans; Redland v Hampton; Sevenoaks v Woking; Southampton v Havant, Southgate v Teddington, Wolverhampton v Harborne; Worthing v Bognor; Yate v Newbury.

EAST WOMEN'S CLUBS INDOOR TOURNAMENT (at Kelsey Kerridge SC, Cambridge, 9.15)

RUGBY LEAGUE

Kick-off 2.0 unless stated

Silk Cut Challenge Cup
First round
Mayfield v Eccles
Moldgreen v Durham University
Oulton v Ideal ABI
Ovenden v Hensingham
Saddleworth v Ellenborough
Wigan St Judes v Wigan Rose Br
Wigan St P v Halton Simms Cross (2.30)

First round replay
Clayton v Normanton

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEAGUE: Premier division: Beverley v West Hull; Dudley Hill v Lock Lane; Leigh Miners v Egremont (2.30); Woolston v Oldham St Annes (2.30). First division: Thornhill v Eastmoor; Walney Central v Millom. Postponed: Barrow Island v East Leeds; Blackbrook v Leigh East. Second division: New Earswick v Skirlaugh, Redhill v Shaw Cross; York Acorn v Milford. Postponed: Featherstone Amateurs v Dewsbury Moor.

RUGBY UNION

Kick-off 2.30 unless stated

International match
Ireland v Italy
(at Lansdowne Road, 3.0)

Heineken Cup
Semi-final
Leicester v Toulouse (3.05)

Tour match
Neath v United States XV
(at Cardiff Arms Park)

Courage Clubs Championship
First division
Bath v Saracens (2.15)
Gloucester v Northampton ... P
Orrell v London Irish ... P
West Hartlepool v Bristol (3.0)

Second division
Bedford v Blackheath ... P
Coventry v Rugby ... P
London Scottish v Wakefield ... P
Moseley v Waterloo ... P
Newcastle v Nottingham ... P
Rotherham v Richmond ... P

Third division
Exeter v Otley ... P
Harrogate v Liverpool St Helens (2.15)
Leeds v Havant (3.0)
London Welsh v Fylde ... P
Lydney v Clifton ... P
Redruth v Morley ... P
Walsall v Rosslyn Park ... P
Wharfedale v Reading ... P

Fourth division north
Birmingham/Solihull v Hereford ... P
Kendal v Aspatria
Lichfield v Winnington Park ... P
Manchester v Nuneaton ... P
Preston Grasshoppers v Sandal ... P
Stoke-on-Trent v Stourbridge ... P
Worcester v Sheffield ... P

Fourth division south
Barking v North Walsham ... P
Berry Hill v Tabard ... P
Henley v Weston-super-Mare ... P
High Wycombe v Camberley ... P
Metropolitan Police v Cheltenham ... P
Newbury v Askeans ... P
Plymouth v Charlton Park ... P

SOUTH WEST: First division: Barnstaple v Salisbury, Bridgwater v Maidenhead; *Camborne v Gloucester OB,* Launceston v Brixham: Matson v Torquay: Stroud v St Ives.

LONDON AND SOUTH EAST: First division: Basingstoke v Wimbledon; Esher v *Norwich;* Guildford and Godalming v Sudbury; Old Mid-Whitgiftians v Sutton and Epsom; *Old Colfeians v Staines;* Ruislip v Southend, Thurrock v Harlow.

MIDLANDS: First division: Barkers Butts v *Mansfield;* Belgrave v Leighton Buzzard; Broad Street v Leamington; Burton v Hinckley; Camp Hill v Derby; Westleigh v Stockwood Park; Whitchurch v Stafford, Wolverhampton v Scunthorpe.

NORTH: First division: Bradford and Bingley v Sedgley Park; Bridlington v Tynedale; Broughton Park v West Park Bramhope; Macclesfield v Wigton; New Brighton v Stockton; Widnes v Hull Ionians.

Welsh League
First division
Dunvant v Newbridge ... P
Ebbw Vale v Bridgend ... P
Llanelli v Treorchy ... P
Pontypridd v Newport ... P
Swansea v Caerphilly ... P

Second division
Abercynon v South Wales Police ... P
Bonymaen v Abertillery ... P
Llandovery v Pontypool ... P
Cardiff Institute v Cross Keys ... P
Ystradgynlais v Aberavon ... P

THIRD DIVISION: Postponed: Builth Wells v Rumney; Kenfig Hill v Tenby United, Narberth v Llanharan, Penarth v Pyle, Tondu v Merthyr, Tredegar v Mountain Ash.

Swalec Cup
Fifth round
Blackwood v Hirwaun

Tennents Premiership
Third division
Peebles v Musselburgh (2.0)
Preston Lodge v Selkirk ... P
Stewart's Melville FP v Kilmarnock (2.0)

Fourth division
Corstorphine v Gordonians (2.0)
Hillhead/Jordanhill v Haddington (2.0)
Langholm v Glenrothes (2.0)

CLUB MATCHES: *Dundee HSFP v Kirkcaldy* (2.0); Glasgow Academicals v Ayr (2.0); Hawick v West of Scotland (2.0); Heriot's FP v Glasgow Southern (2.0); Melrose v Edinburgh Academicals (2.0), Stirling County v Watsonians (2.0).

SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL: Scotland v Wales (at Myreside, Edinburgh, 2.0).

OTHER SPORT

ATHLETICS: World cross country *international (in Belfast)*

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Crystal Palace v Leicester (7.30), Derby v Thames Valley (7.30); Newcastle v London (7.30), Worthing v Hemel and Watford (8.0). *National League: Men: First division:* Bury and Bolton v Guildford (7.30), Cardiff v Oxford (8.0), Coventry v Stockton (7.30), Solent v Nottingham (8.0); Westminster v Mid Sussex (8.0). Second division: Bournemouth v South Wales (8.0); *Chessington v* Slough (8.0); Solihull v Sheffield (8.0). Women: First division: Crystal Palace v Sheffield (5.30). Women's National Trophy: Semi-finals: Doncaster v Plymouth (4.15), *Tyne and Wear v Leicester (8.0)*

DARTS: WDC world championship (at Purfleet); Embassy world championship (at Frimley Green)

ICE HOCKEY: Superleague: Basingstoke v Newcastle (6.30); *Cardiff v Ayr* (7.0); Nottingham v Manchester (6.40)

LACROSSE: Shepherds Friendly Society League: Premier division: Cheadle Hulme v Boardman and Eccles, Moorthorpe v Heaton Mersey, Cheadle v Poynton; Mellor v Stockport, Hulmeians v Timperley

SNOOKER: Liverpool Victoria charity challenge (in Birmingham)

SPEED SKATING: British short-track championships (at Guildford)

VOLLEYBALL: National League: Men: First division: Reebok Liverpool City v Leeds; Malory Lewisham v Crofton Sportswearhouse, Polonia Ealing v City of Stoke; Sportset Whitefield v Tooting Aquila; Warwick Riga v Wessex.

TOMORROW

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

FA Cup
Third round
Charlton v Newcastle (1.30)
Everton v Swindon
Manchester Utd v Tottenham (4.10)
Notts County v Aston Villa (12.0)
Wycombe v Bradford (1.30)

Nationwide League
Third division
Fulham v Swansea ... P

ICIS LEAGUE: First division: Marlow v Aldershot Town.

LEAGUE OF WALES: Inter Cable-Tel v Bangor City.

FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Bray v Cork (2.0); St Patrick's Ath v Shelbourne (6.30).

UK LIVING WOMEN'S FA CUP: Fourth round: Arsenal v Barry; Chelmsford v Huddersfield; Croydon v Liverpool; Garswood/St Helens v Ilkeston; Highfield v Berkhamsted; Preston Rangers v Denham; Reading v Leyton Orient; Sherborne v Everton; Southampton v Whitehawk; Stockport v Bangor City; Tottenham v Collier R; Tranmere v Wembley. Postponed: Aston Villa v Brighton and Hove; Chelsea v Millwall; Doncaster v Sheffield Wed; Ipswich v Middlesbrough.

HOCKEY

DTZ MIDLAND INDOOR INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT: Classification matches (at Kidderminster, 9.30).

WOMEN'S INDOOR NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Chelmsford, Hightown, Ipswich, Leicester, Orton, Slough, Sutton Coldfield (at Crystal Palace NRC, 9.20). First division: Bracknell, Canterbury, Doncaster, Ealing, Sheffield, Wimbledon, Woking (at Loughborough University, 9.20). Second division: Aldridge, Bradford, Exmouth, Liverpool, Portishead/Firebrands, St Albans, St Austell (at East Grinstead HC, 9.20).

WELSH WOMEN'S INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP: Cardiff Athletic, Cardiff Institute, Dowlais, St Fagans, Pontypridd (at University of Wales College, Cardiff, 10.0).

WOMEN'S CLUB MATCHES: Ban Rhydding v Bowdon, Brooklands v Oldham; Deeside v Colwyn Bay; Horsham v Southampton.

RUGBY UNION

Heineken Cup
Semi-final
Brive v Cardiff (2.30)

European Conference
Semi-finals
Bourgoin v Narbonne (2.0)
Castres v Agen (2.0)

Courage Clubs Championship
First division
Wasps v Harlequins
(at Loftus Road, 3.0)

SRU inter-district championship
Glasgow v Caledonia
(at Murrayfield, 2.0)
Scottish Borders v Edinburgh
(at Poynder Park, Kelso, 3.0)

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL MATCH: England v Spain (at Headingley, 2.0)

RUGBY LEAGUE

Club matches
Dewsbury v Batley ... C
Keighley v Huddersfield (3.0)
Oldham v Swinton ... C
Whitehaven v Carlisle (3.30)

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Chester v Crystal Palace (6.0); London v Leopards (7.0). *National League: Men: First division:* Brixton v Liverpool (4.0); Plymouth v Ware (4.0). *Second division:* Derby v South Bank (5.0), London v Northampton (4.0), Swindon v Flintshire *(4.0); Thames Valley v Aston (4.0).*

DARTS: WDC world championship (at Purfleet). Embassy world championship (at Frimley Green).

ICE HOCKEY: Superleague: Newcastle v *Cardiff* (6.30); *Sheffield v Basingstoke* (6.30); Manchester v Ayr (6.0); Bracknell v Nottingham (6.0).

SNOOKER: Liverpool Victoria charity challenge (in Birmingham)

VOLLEYBALL: National League: Women: First division: Reebok Liverpool City v KLEA Leeds; Sheffield Wednesday v London Malory; Essex Astonians v Orpington; Britannia Music City v Smoke Free Birmingham; Loughborough v Ashcombe Guildford

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SATURDAY JANUARY 4 1997

Chicken farmer's hat-trick in final one-day game brings tour of Zimbabwe to sorry end

Brandes plucks out England's heart

FROM SIMON WILDE IN HARARE

HARARE (England won toss): Zimbabwe beat England by 131 runs

JUST when one thought things could not get any worse, this happens: an England performance so shameful that it achieved the impossible, making their followers look back with nostalgia on the two earlier defeats in this series of one-day internationals. Those were both by narrow margins: this one at Harare Sports Club yesterday was crushing in its magnitude, a sorry end to a dreadfully disappointing six-week tour.

In some ways it was an all too predictable conclusion. Zimbabwe, having already won their first one-day series, were relaxed, confident and adventurous: England showed few indications that the exhortations of their coach, David Lloyd, about making amends for throwing away the previous game had got home.

Not that England did not have every reason to win yesterday, as defeat ensured that in five meetings with the full Zimbabwe side here they have not won once, a stark contrast to many predictions that they would come here and inflate their reputations.

Instead, Lloyd and Michael Atherton, the England captain, while remaining determinedly upbeat, were last night forced to accept that Zimbabwe were indeed the better one-day side, more disciplined in every department of the game, though their excuse that this England team was chosen with the Test matches in mind is unacceptable. As Lloyd had said only the previous day, it is one-day cricket that "pays the rent" and the selectors have a duty to the public to select players capable of winning one-day matches, especially against junior members of the cricketing fraternity.

Criticism mounts 1
West Indies win 36
Indians routed 36

Cricket in Zimbabwe is a small-time, largely amateur, affair and the notion that their players walked straight off their farms to rout England only confirms the prejudices of those who misguidedly believe they cannot play the game seriously. So, sure enough, England's chief tormentor yesterday was Eddo Brandes, 33, some time cricketer and full-time Mashonaland chicken farmer, known to his friends as "Chicken George". By removing Knight with the last ball of his second over and Crawley and Hussain with the first and second balls of his third, he not only accomplished the first hat-trick for Zimbabwe — and the first involving England — in one-day internationals, but also effectively decided the match.

England were then 13 for three, chasing a daunting 250 to win, and although Stewart and Atherton added 32 in ten overs it was only a temporary reprieve. Brandes, bowling straight through, removed them both in successive overs and when Streak quickly followed up by dismissing Irani and White before they had scored, it drew the memorable phrase from one commentator that "there are more ducks in this English innings than in the average village pond".

That was 63 for seven, which soon became 77 for eight when Strang, the match-winner on New Year's Day but not required to turn his arm over here until most of the damage was done, baffled Gough into squirting a catch to backward point. Only some last-resort hitting from Croft and Mullally saved England from beating their lowest total in one-day cricket, 93 all out against Australia at Headingley in 1975.

They put on 41 in eight overs before Guy Whittall knocked out Mullally's leg stump and followed up by having Silverwood caught at mid-on for the fifth nought of the innings and its third golden duck. England had been dismissed in fewer than 30 overs for 118 by 4.15pm.

Of course, although the mischievous will portray England as being put to flight by a chicken farmer, just as they did when Brandes played a leading role in Zimbabwe beating them in the World Cup five years ago, the fact is that he is a top-class bowler who performed superbly yesterday.

He stuck to an immaculate line, swung the ball away from the bat and got it to bounce awkwardly. If the balls that claimed the wickets of Knight — who was again caught down the leg side — Crawley and Stewart were unexceptional, the ones that removed Hussain and Atherton were magnificent, leaving the bat and drawing their prey into the stroke.

Hussain, the hat-trick victim, was superbly held by Andy Flower diving far to his right, one of five catches for the Zimbabwe wicketkeeper. Not many international sides would have kept Brandes at bay on the form he showed yesterday and his figures of five for 28 were no more than he deserved.

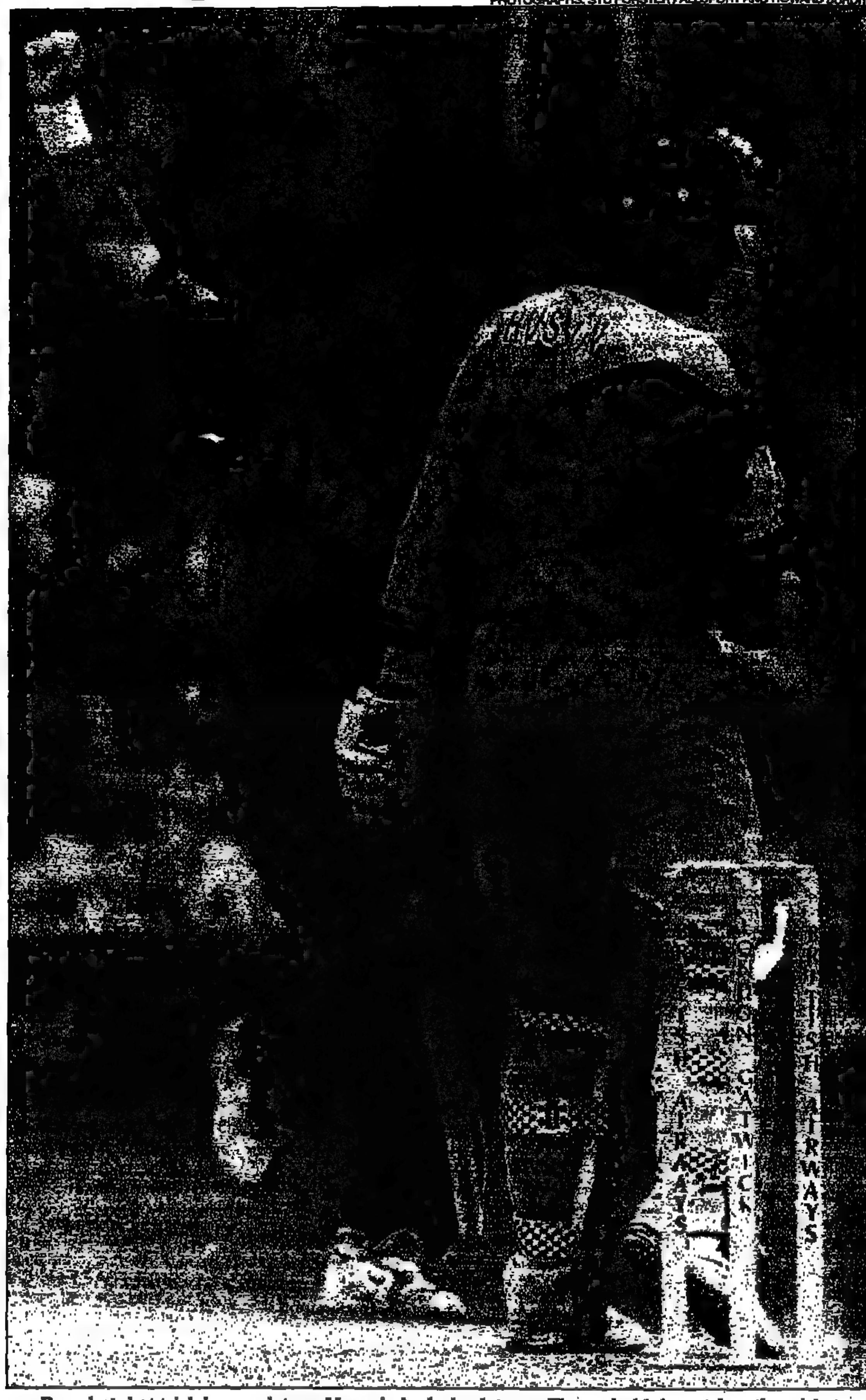
Zimbabwe's assurance revealed itself most in their batting. They always looked to be creative, used their feet well to make room to play shots, and set out to target Croft. Grant Flower, a stonewaller in the Test matches, led the way with a bright 62 from 87 balls and his brother, Andy, chipped in with 35 from 30 balls.

But the central figure in Zimbabwe's innings was Campbell, the captain, who took his fourth half-century off England on the tour. He did appear to enjoy one sizeable piece of good fortune early on, however, when television replays suggested that umpire Robinson should have given him out caught at the wicket in Irani's first over. But in view of what happened later, it probably would not have made much difference if he had.

PHOTOGRAPHS: STU FORSTER / ALLSPORT AND HOWARD BURDITT

Brandes celebrates the dismissal of Knight, caught down the leg side

Crawley becomes his second victim, falling leg-before first ball



Brandes's hat-trick is complete as Hussain looks back to see Flower hold the catch at the wicket

SCOREBOARD FROM HARARE

England won toss

ZIMBABWE

G W Flower c Mullally b White 62
(123min, 87 balls, 6 fours)
A C Waller run out (Atherton/Stewart) 19
(63min, 41 balls, 1 fours)
*A D R Campbell not out 80
(146min, 103 balls, 1 six, 4 fours)
†A Flower c Stewart b Irani 35
(37min, 30 balls, 1 six, 3 fours)
C N Evans c Stewart b Gough 1
(4min, 5 balls)
G J Whittall b Croft 1
(6min, 4 balls)
D L Houghton c Stewart b Mullally 19
(23min 22 balls, 2 sixes)
P A Strang run out (White/Stewart) 13
(12min, 10 balls, 1 six, 1 four)
Extras (b 4, lb 5, w 8, nb 2) 19
Total (7 wkts, 50 overs, 210min) 249
H H Streak, E A Brandes and J A Rennie did not bat

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-56 (G W Flower 31), 2-131 (Campbell 38), 3-181 (Campbell 52) 4-183 (Campbell 53), 5-190 (Campbell 55), 6-220 (Campbell 66), 7-249 (Campbell 80)

BOWLING: Mullally 10-3-38-1 (w 2, 1 six, 4 fours, 8-3-23-0, 2-0-16-1), Gough 10-1-42-1 (nb 2, w 2; 2 fours, 4-0-19-0, 2-0-14-0, 4-1-9-1), Silverwood 5-0-17-0 (w 2, 3 fours: one spell) White 7-0-39-1 (w 1, 1 six, 3 fours; 2-0-9-0, 3-0-15-1, 2-0-15-0), Irani 10-0-39-1 (w 1; 1 six, one spell), Croft 8-0-54-1 (2 sixes, 3 fours, 2-0-17-0, 6-0-37-1)

Score after 15 overs: 58-1.

ENGLAND

N V Knight c A Flower b Brandes 3
(12min, 8 balls)
†A J Stewart c A Flower b Brandes 29
(59min, 49 balls, 2 fours)
J P Crawley lbw b Brandes 0
(4min, 1 ball)
N Hussain c A Flower b Brandes 0
(1min, 1 ball)
*M A Atherton c A Flower b Brandes 18
(60min, 43 balls, 1 four)
R C Irani c Whittall b Streak 0
(15min, 6 balls)
C White c A Flower b Streak 0
(14min, 6 balls)
R D B Croft not out 30
(61min, 37 balls, 1 six, 1 four)
D Gough c Streak b Strang 7
(13min, 8 balls, 1 four)
A D Mullally b Whittall 20
(31min, 23 balls, 1 six, 2 fours)
C E W Silverwood c Evans b Whittall 0
(1min, 1 ball)
Extras (w 8, nb 3) 11
Total (30 overs, 148min) 118

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-9 (Stewart 5), 2-13 (Stewart 9), 3-13 (Stewart 9), 4-45 (Atherton 9), 5-54 (Irani 0), 6-55 (White 0), 7-63 (Croft 7), 8-77 (Croft 13), 9-118 (Croft 30)

BOWLING (one spell each): Brandes 10-0-28-5 (including hat-trick) (w 1; 2 fours); Rennie 3-0-11-0 (1 four); Streak 10-0-50-2 (nb 3, w 6; 3 fours); Strang 5-0-18-1 (w 1; 2 sixes); Whittall 2-0-11-2 (1 four).

Score after 15 overs: 45-4

Zimbabwe won by 131 runs.

Match award: E A Brandes (Adjudicator: J H Edrich).

Umpires: I D Robinson and R B Tiffin. Reserve umpire: G Evans. Referee: Hanumant Singh (India).

SERIES DETAILS

FIRST INTERNATIONAL: Zimbabwe won by two wickets (Bulawayo, December 15)
SECOND INTERNATIONAL: Zimbabwe won by five runs on revised target (Harare, January 1)

☐ Compiled by Bill Frindall

Emotional Curcic demands transfer

BY DAVID MADDOCK

SASA CURCIC, the Yugoslavia international, yesterday demanded a transfer from Aston Villa just five months after a £4 million move to the club. In an emotional outburst, the Serb expressed his bitter regret at moving to the Midlands club and pleaded for an immediate move.

Curcic was trailed by several clubs in the summer after becoming unsettled when Bolton Wanderers, the club which brought him to England from Partisan Belgrade for £1.5 million, were relegated from the FA Carling Premiership. Villa won the chase, thanks largely to the player's friendship with their Serbian forward, Savo Milosevic.

But as Villa prepare for tomorrow's FA Cup third round tie at Notts County the temperamental Curcic has downed tools after being left on the substitutes' bench for the last eight matches. "I have thought about this for some time, but now I have made my decision. I want to leave Villa right now," he said.

"Leaving Bolton and joining Aston Villa was the biggest mistake I have made in my life, but it will be my last mistake. I cannot help thinking I betrayed the Bolton fans by leaving a club where I was so happy. I just looked at the money and the glory of playing in the Premiership."

Brian Little, the Villa manager, protested no knowledge of the player's unhappiness. "This has really surprised me because Sasa has said nothing at all to me," Little said. "I will sit down and thrash the whole matter out, but the player cost us £4 million. He will not be leaving for less than that."

Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur and Middlesbrough had all previously expressed an interest in the player.

FA CUP THIRD ROUND OUTLOOK

Blackburn v Port Vale	(no inspection planned)
Sheffield Wed v Grimsby	(no inspection planned)
Chelsea v West Bromwich	(no inspection planned)
Arsenal v Sunderland	(no inspection planned)
Liverpool v Burnley	(no inspection planned)
QPR v Huddersfield	(no inspection planned)
Wolverhampton v Portsmouth	(no inspection planned)
Plymouth v Peterborough	(no inspection planned)
Reading v Southampton	(no inspection planned)
*Charlton v Newcastle	(no inspection planned)
*Wycombe v Bradford	(no inspection planned)
*Manchester Utd v Tottenham	(no inspection planned)
*Everton v Swindon	(no inspection planned)
HOPEFUL	
Wrexham v West Ham	(no inspection planned)
Middlesbrough v Chester	(no inspection planned)
Nottingham Forest v Ipswich	(no inspection planned)
Norwich v Sheffield Utd	(no inspection planned)
Carlisle v Tranmere	(no inspection planned)
*Notts County v Aston Villa	(inspection am today)
Stevenage v Birmingham (at Birmingham)	(inspection am today)
OFF	
Hednesford v York	(new date January 13)
Barnsley v Oldham	(new date January 14)
Brentford v Manchester City	(new date January 14)
Gillingham v Derby	(new date January 14)
Crewe v Wimbledon	(new date January 14)
Luton v Bolton	(new date January 14)
Chesterfield v Bristol City	(new date January 14)
Watford v Oxford	(new date January 14)
Crystal Palace v Leeds	(new date January 14)
Coventry v Woking	(new date January 15)
Leicester v Southend	(new date January 15)
Stoke v Stockport	(new date January 15)

*Playing tomorrow

Sports wipe-out grows as Arctic snap goes on

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

With no sign of a let-up in the freezing temperatures, football's FA Cup third round goes ahead today in a depleted state. Twelve of the scheduled 32 ties this weekend have been called off, with seven others dependent on no deterioration in the conditions overnight.

Birmingham City, who are due to play non-league Stevenage Borough this afternoon, have a pitch inspection at St Andrews this morning. Notts County will do similar, at Meadow Lane, ahead of their scheduled tie against Aston Villa tomorrow.

In rugby union, Leicester's Heineken Cup semi-final against Toulouse rested on a 9 o'clock pitch inspection this morning. Representatives of both clubs, with Jim Fleming, the match referee, will decide whether the Welford Road surface is too hazardous.

Leicester have spent the past 48 hours making strenuous efforts to ensure the pitch is playable and, last night, their efforts seemed to be bearing fruit. A hot-air balloon had made a substantial difference within six hours. The other semi-final, between Brive and Cardiff tomorrow, goes ahead as planned.

Bath are also making every effort to play their Courage Clubs Championship first division match against Saracens, who are keen to give Francois Pienaar, the former South Africa captain, his first game since he signed for the club. Bath have been using ten industrial hot-air blowers at the Recreation Ground.

The Courage second division programme for today has been wiped out but the third division games at Leeds and Harrogate are still on. This afternoon's entire Welsh National League first division programme was cancelled by lunchtime yesterday.

Horse racing continues to be badly hit, with Musselburgh the sole surviving turf meeting, subject to a 7.30am inspection. The all-weather cards at Lingfield, which is being televised, and Wolverhampton go ahead.

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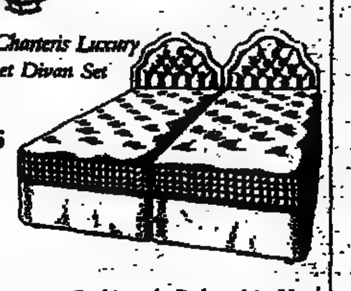
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THE TIMES
weekend

The best of Italy from Umbria to Tuscany
travel - 14-16

SATURDAY JANUARY 4 1997

And here's a show I did earlier

Frances Bissell, the Times cook, has never seen a TV cookery programme. So making her own seemed a recipe for disaster

It sounds like an unusual recipe for a television cookery series: a cook who has never seen a cookery programme and a director who has never directed one. When my new series was shown in the West Country, journalists were bemused. What was new about *Frances Bissell's West Country Kitchen*? How did it differ from all the other cookery programmes, they asked. I don't know, was my pathetic reply, I have never watched any of them. We don't have television. "The TV cook without a set of her own" was one resulting photo caption.

I am not even sure I should be writing this article. Maybe it's not the done thing to tell how many haunches of wild boar had to be bought in order to produce one on screen? Or to pass on the gossip that one hears about other television cooks, such as X's cake recipe not turning out, however many times it was baked, and "You know, those aren't really Y's hands you see on the box". But I shall write about it all, anyway, because I found it fascinating.

It began, just like it does in the movies, with a chance encounter over dinner at the Dorchester hotel in London, sipping Château Palmer 1961. "Have you ever done any television?" I was asked. The scene changes to Plymouth a few months later, in the offices of Westcountry Television. I still have the outline of the series that we discussed then: "6 x 30 minute programmes. 12 x 15 minutes segments. Recipe plus ingredients; include producers on location; shopping and cooking." And thus, by some extraordinary stroke of good fortune, Westcountry Television commissioned me to do the cookery series that I have always wanted to do.

Between that meeting and the "wrap" party on the final day of shooting, however, many things happened, most of them intriguing, some of them terrifying, and all of them new experiences.

First, the director, Peter Francis Browne, visits me to see if I will do; he seems to think I will, so that's all right. He finds me a West Country kitchen, between Lostwithiel and Bodmin, in a bewitching part of Cornwall. It's a converted watermill, with Aga, large kitchen and a conservatory.

The make-up and wardrobe consultant comes to see me in London, flings open my wardrobe door, and we go off — with an allowance — to buy country clothes in tasteful shades of slurry and leaf mould; I am firmly instructed to leave behind my city black.

The wardrobe consultant and I have great trouble in finding the right colour aprons, because the director has forbidden blue-and-white stripes and other aprony colours. We solve the problem by having chefs' white aprons dyed in suitably organic tones of farmhouse-butter yellow, sage green and caramel.

An important day arrives. I meet the cameraman, Julian Clinkard. It's going to be all right, I think. And it gets more all right as the series progresses, and I realise that he has a serious interest in food.

At last the day to start filming dawns. I wonder if I can call in sick. I'm terrified. We set off for Devon, the first location, a cold, windswept hillside with a lot of sheep. The farmer is as nervous as I am, and we give each other moral support. She also gives me a vest, and my teeth stop chattering. Filming on day two is to be the tantalising wild boar dish on Bodmin moor.

About ten days later, location filming is completed, after we have visited a whole host of people and places — the winemaker Mark Sharman on the Sharpham Estate, Warren's Bakery in St Just, at the tip of Cornwall, organic poultry farmers Bill and Charlotte Reynolds at Swaddles Green Farm in Somerset, Ann Petch and her herd of rare breed pigs in north Devon, a fish auction at Newlyn with John Strike, Porthleven's fishmonger, the Duchy of Cornwall oyster farm, and many other excellent and dedicated farmers and producers. I think to myself that at least the cookery part will be easy. But I am wrong.

First, though, the glass roof of the conservatory, adjoining the kitchen, has to be carpeted, because the rain sounds like flamenco dancers on the roof. Someone phones the local carpet shop and asks if they do roofs. Next day a man comes and carpets it. We also get the kitchen kitted out with stunning pottery and ceramics from Devon, as well as things I have found in local antique shops. The florist from Lostwithiel comes in to create artlessly rustic bunches of flowers to thrust into glazed salt jars.

Equipment and utensils begin to arrive from kitchenware shops all over the country. Lakeland Plastics is absolutely heroic, and its catalogue yields pots and gadgets that I didn't even know existed. Fine stainless steel pans come from Divertimenti. Not one set, but two. One for me to cook with, and one for "the one I prepared earlier". Our assistant producer, Alison Field, knows all about these things, having worked on other cookery programmes, and orders food, props and equipment.

I begin to have an inkling that being a television cook won't be like cooking in my own kitchen. For starters, I have an assistant, or home economist as she appears in the credits. Leith's-trained and delightful to work with, Claire Simmonds arrives. She washes all the pots and pans ready for use. Then vast quantities of food begin to appear. Not one but four legs of wild boar. Four legs of kid. Masses of mutton. Six dozen oysters, and I only need half a dozen for my recipe. Tubs and tubs of clotted cream. Bundles and more bundles of leeks. And what seems like an oceanful of fish, for my single pot of fish stew. The crew eats very well for the next 12 days.

Finally, filming begins. There I am, at the worktop, ready to cook a mutton cobbler. Behind me, I can hear Claire in the scullery chopping leeks for

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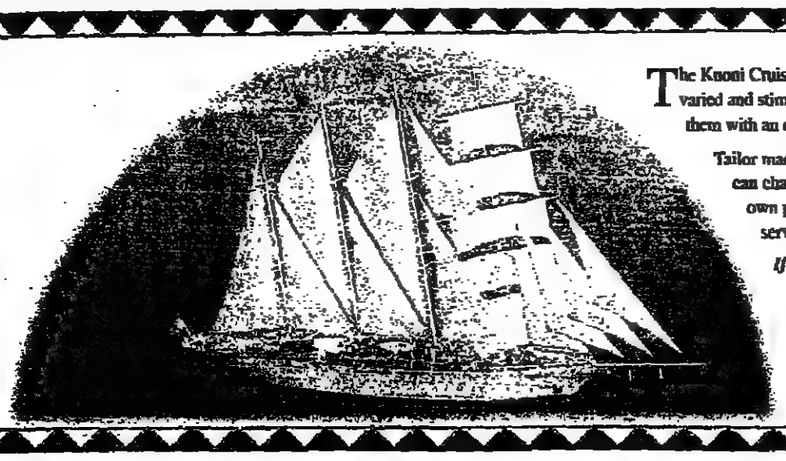

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SERIOUS SHOPPING | FOOTBALL CLUBS

There was uproar towards the end of last year, when the Football Association announced that a new England strip would be launched in February 1997. "How unfair," cried impoverished parents, "that so soon after Christmas, we should have to fork out again for these shiny polyester things with three miserable lions on, at the cynical price of forty-odd quid." It was argued that the new strips would instantly render obsolete the Christmas presents so recently torn open by the new breed of young supporter, unable to grasp the complex scoring system of the national game but able, with ease, to quote recent performance figures for shares in Manchester United PLC.

The screaming watchdogs presumably felt the wind of Tony Blair's earlier witterings beneath their wings, and imagined their own whingeing thus ennobled. For it was Mr Blair who warned that football clubs which exploited the replica strip industry were in danger of losing touch with their roots. Not that he has ever exploited his occasional support of Newcastle United, of course. Or lost much with his roots.

Every time a football team, national or international, changes its strip, the parents gripe about how they cannot afford to keep buying new ones. This is ludicrous. I cannot afford to buy a Ferrari, but I am not campaigning to have such cars banned. I have not written to Mr Blair complaining that Rolls-Royce has brought out a new model again and me and my mates don't have the readies.

What about the old-fashioned response to a child's demands, such as a clip round the ear and a firm, "No, you can't have another Newcastle strip: mention it again and you'll be put up for adoption"? When little Boadicea demands a Middlesbrough strip with Ravanelli written on the back, why not point out that when you were her age you had to walk seven miles in bare feet every morning to get the milk, and counted yourself lucky.

There is a much more 1990s alternative: downsize their greed. I have travelled the country in search of a solution to the replica kit problem. If Everton, for example, are not allowed to skin their

BY GILES COREN

fans for £45 for a shirt, then they hope to persuade them to buy a set of Everton curtains (£32), or if that fails then a Joe Royle watch (£22). Surely you can run to an Everton key fob (£3)? A packet of Everton fruit drops (£1.50)? They would rather sell you an Everton signet ring for £133.50, but they will settle for unloading a lighter (£1).

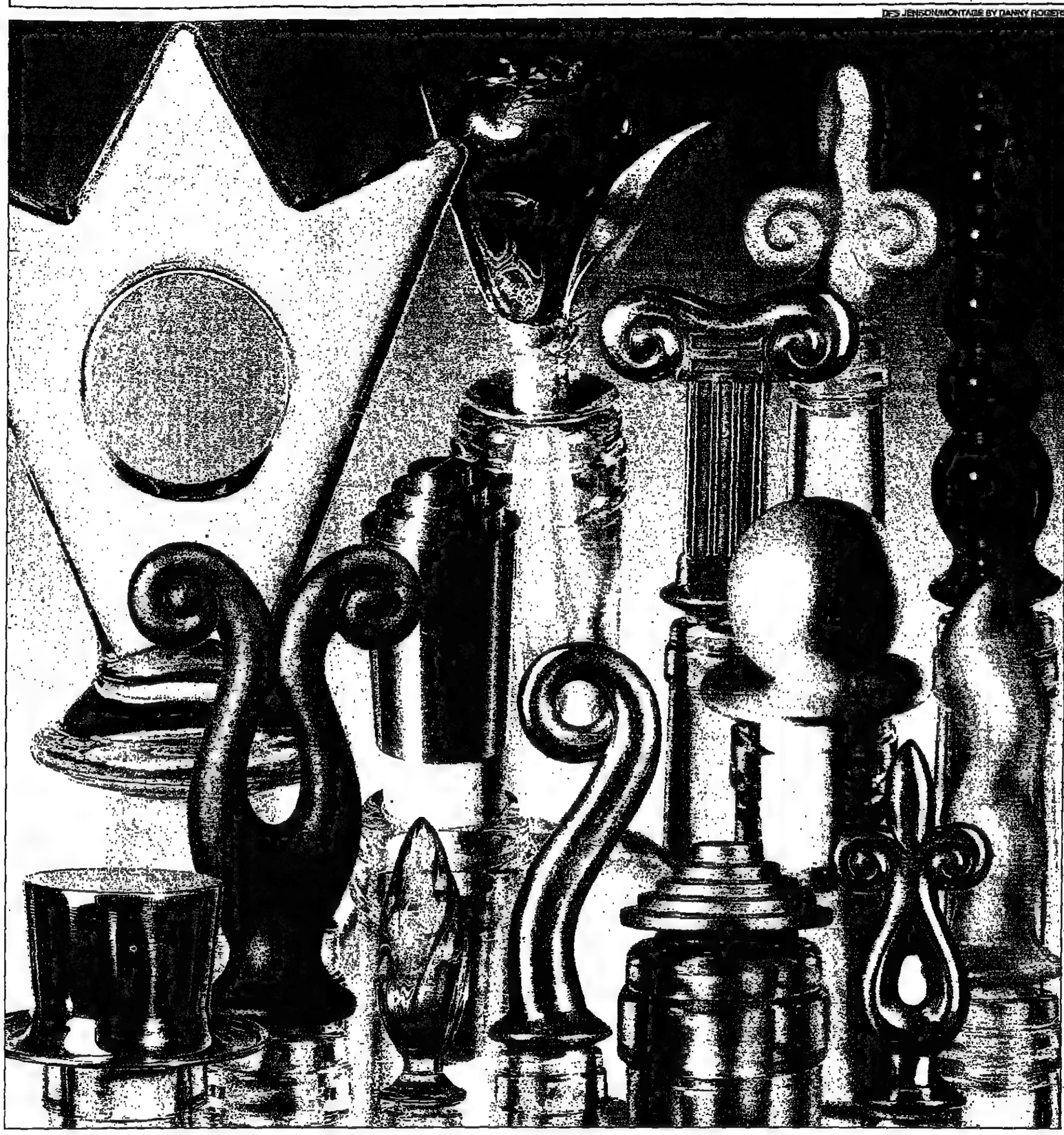
Instead of a Derby County away goalkeeper's shirt (£35), why not buy your child a Derby County money box (£7) so he can save up for the shirt himself? (And how much demand can there be for the Derby County away goalkeeper's shirt? It must be restricted to a Derby fan, who plays in goal and already has the home goalkeeper's shirt. Optimistic.)

For Liverpool fans, may I recommend a small plastic bus painted in the Liverpool colours. At £9.99 it represents a considerable saving against a shirt with Neil Ruddock written on the back (£37.99). Better still is the cassette tape of *24 Anfield Anthems* at £7.99, and the car air freshener at £1.75.

Norwich fans can invest in a fetching doormat (£9.99) — very appropriate. Arsenal fans could buy a "comb in a case" (£1.99), a "fold-away hairbrush with mirror" (£3.75), or an Arsenal deodorant body spray (£1.49). "I scored at QPR" knickers (£3) will be ideal for your daughter, if you cannot afford the whole strip. Young Plymouth Argyle fans will thrill to their very own cabbage patch doll, Pilgrim Pete (£10). Any child who has been nagging for "Giggsy's No 11 shirt" will hardly be able to believe his luck when you give him a Wrexham ruler and bib and a photograph of Leicester City's Filbert Street stadium (£2.50).

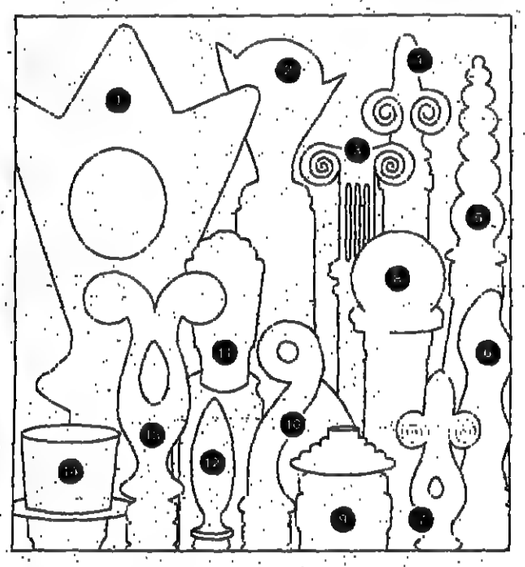
The fact is that replica strips are horrible to the point of being dangerous. They are gleaming plasticated things that could make a lizard sweat. They make sparks when you take them off, they make you smell, and they cannot really be washed. They have stupid inlaid designs, unnecessary flashes on the shoulders, and the names of beer brands on the back. Glasgow Rangers even make a romper suit for babies with the logo of McEwans lager on it. Is this some strange Scottish irony? Or do Scots babies drink beer? Middlesbrough fans don't. I know that because from their catalogue I have ordered some "Own-Label Cabernet Sauvignon" and engraved crystal wine glasses.

DES JENSON/MONTAGE BY DANNY ROBERTS



Top of the bottle stoppers

THERE ARE two main categories of bottle stoppers: drop-in stoppers work on the same principle as a teaspoon suspended in a bottle to keep the fizz in champagne and sparkling wines; bung stoppers, for non-fizzy drinks, seal the bottle so that it can be laid on its side in the fridge — useful because some stopper-topped bottles are too tall for the fridge shelf. Bungs made of plastic or silicon do not absorb smells, can be wiped clean and are sturdier than cork stoppers. But state-of-the-art cork versions are now "reinforced" in brushed-stainless steel. Here is a selection of current and new designs for 1997. SOPHIE CHAMIER



KEY (stoppers not to size): **1, 4, 5, 8, 12 and 13**. Coloured, multishaped bottle stoppers, £2.50 each, in clear or frosted acrylic, 10cm-12cm long with plastic bung, Cargo Homeshops nationwide (0990 124950 for mail order).
2. Pear champagne stopper, 12cm, with amethyst-coloured glass and sterling silver decorative top with a frosted glass drop, £120, hand-made by RCA-trained jeweller Katie Gayle, available by mail order (including p&p) from Katie Gayle Designs on 0181-870 8798.
3, 7 and 10: Cast aluminium and cork stoppers, £6.95 each in Column, Fleur-de-Lis and Swirl design, 11.5cm-14cm long, from The Pier, branches nationwide (0171-351 7100).
8. The Minimal twist bung stopper, 6cm long, in silver-plated solid brass, with white silicon stopper, by Bouchon, available by mail order £19.95 (including p&p) on 0181-749 7566.
9 and 11. Malt steel drop-in champagne stopper (42001-4), 7cm long, £25.99, and the Romanowski cork and brushed-steel wine stopper (43001-4), 9.5cm long, costs £29.99, both by mail order from Midas International (01223 302402).
14. Sterling silver Top Hat cork stopper, 4cm high, £55 from branches of Links of London in SW1 (0171-930 0400); EC2 (0171-629 9669); EC3 (0171-623 3103); EC4 (0171-329 2727).

'For a half-dozen perfect oysters we had to open six dozen'

Continued from page 1

our next sequence, the fish stew. In front of me, the director, assistant producer, production assistant, electrician, sound man and the cameraman "Forget about us, Frances; pretend one of your neighbours has come in and you're chatting to her about what you're cooking. And remember to smile a lot."

Ah, there's the difference. I don't have to smile when I'm cooking at home. There's also no one to see me put a rubber spatula on a hot frying pan — captured on film in minute detail. Smile, Frances.

And why do I have to do everything at least three times? Am I really that bad? Then it is explained to me. With only one camera, each sequence has to be filmed in close-up, then as a mid-shot and then as a "wide", to produce a range of options for the editing process. Which means, I gather, that even if the camera has a wide shot of me chopping leeks, I still have to chop some more for the close-up. Which is why we need so many leeks.

To have a perfect half-dozen fresh, native oysters, Tom, my husband, was up before dawn opening six dozen.

For each sequence we film, I have to repeat what I have said, in case it sounds better the second or third time. I wonder, though, if a little spontaneity isn't lost. Plaiting dough to make a loaf. I describe over and over doing it this way "because that's how my Mum always did it".

By day ten, almost the last day of filming: I have learnt how to break down the cooking into manageable sequences. I realise why it is necessary to have one "that I have prepared earlier", although, of course, the director won't let me say this, as the viewer is not allowed to think that this is anything but absolutely real. So, to film me removing from the oven a perfectly cooked leg of wild boar (the one that I have put in only ten minutes earlier), the camera is stopped. We switch that wild boar to the bottom oven of the Aga and place in the top oven the one I put in to roast at dawn.

But wait... This is a special dish to be served in the evening. So, one and a half hours later, after the film set has been relit to look suitably dusk-like, I am allowed to take the joint out of the oven.

And finally, it's a "wrap". The crew open champagne for me, and we eat the caramelised cloned cream rice pudding and the saffron, brie and honey tart that I made earlier.

Sipping my champagne, I wonder if perhaps Tom and I should buy a television set, and learn from the experts how it should be done.

And yes, of course, there is an accompanying book. Isn't there always?

● *Frances Bissell's West Country Kitchen will be shown on Channel 4 for six consecutive days, beginning on Monday, January 6 at 4pm. Her book of the series,* Frances Bissell's West Country Kitchen, *is published by Macmillan, £12.99*

Read Frances Bissell, the Magazine, pages 63,64

Cover picture of Frances Bissell by PAUL MASSEY

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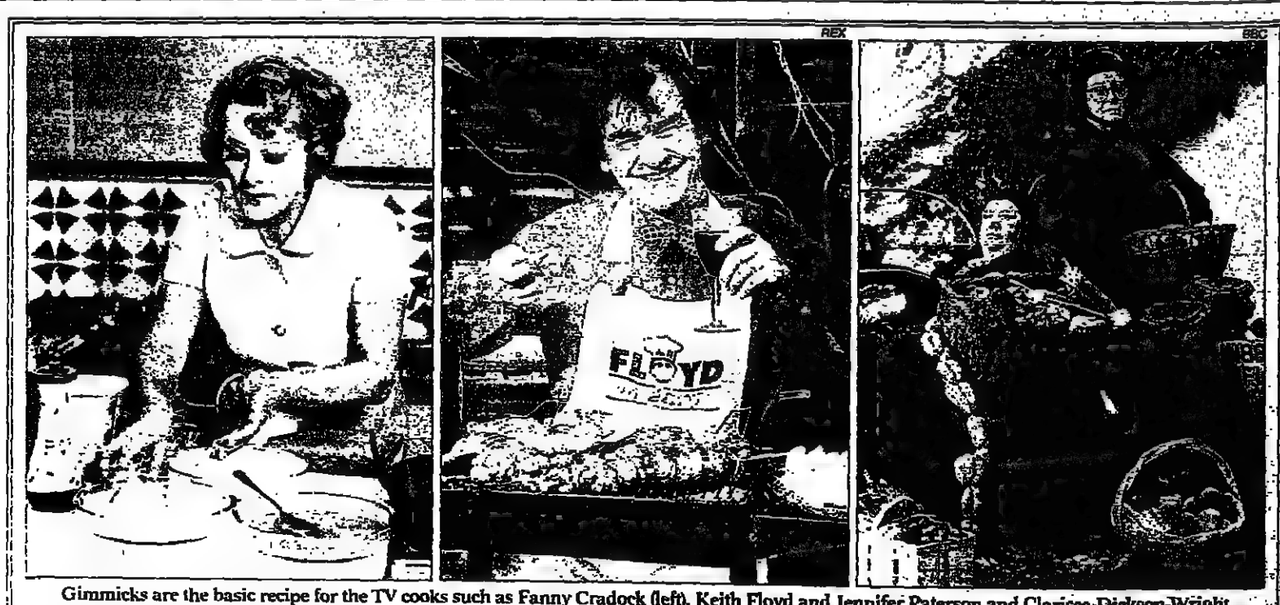

Gimmicks are the basic recipe for the TV cooks such as Fanny Cradock (left), Keith Floyd and Jennifer Paterson and Clarissa Dickson-Wright

SECRETS OF TV COOKS

JENNIFER PATERSON and Clarissa Dickson-Wright had so much going for them it was almost unfair. They were female, funny and unashamedly fat, but they were also eccentric, casually erudite and ... oh yes, Jennifer rode a motorbike.

It doesn't come much better if you are a television producer trying to woo the catering classes. And so it was that two of the biggest (in all senses) television stars of last year were born. The only question is, what took them so long?

Character, gimmickry, call it what you will, but the cruel fact is that if you don't have a certain edge your dream of fame and fortune as a television chef is likely to end in disappointment. But don't despair. television careers can be launched on the flimsiest eccentricity (Kevin Woodford's, for example, is based entirely on his belief that there are three Os in the word cook) and if you find yourself short of a gimmick you can always raid the archives.

Take Nick Nairn, one of the many young chefs to have graduated from the sweat shop of *Ready Steady Cook* and now pretty much a permanent fixture in the daytime schedules. But daytime is easy — it's the prime-time evening slot where real fame and lucrative book deals are to be won. The question is how to do it. If, like Nairn, you're tall, good-looking, quietly spoken and, er ... nice, you find a gimmick pretty quick. I suppose he could have gone for Fanny Cradock's nail polish or Zena Skinner's frocks, but borrowing something from Graham Kerr, a pivot of television cooking, was probably a better idea.

KERR, "The Galloping Gormet" of the early 1970s, had already donated the "quick slurp" to Keith Floyd. Kerr donated his other gimmick, speed, to Nairn. Suitably updated for the more sophisticated 1990s, fast editing, fast-talking and a few well-judged flames put the "wild" in *Wild Harvest with Nick Nairn*. And so it goes on. Madhur Jaffrey had a subcontinent, Ken Hom a wok and Robert Carrier his aspirational lifestyle; and the more recent generation of television chefs — barring the saintly and gimmick-free Delia Smith — are just the same. Gary Rhodes has spiky hair and barrow-boy chat; Rick Stein has Cornwall and a small white dog, and Antonio Carluccio has shown that an ample girth works for the male sex as well.

Whatever next, you ask? Well nobody has yet borrowed Kerr's one remaining gimmick. Remember the mock seduction with which he used to end each programme? Mark my words, it's just a matter of time.

MATTHEW BOND

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When it's cool to be an anorak

Grace Bradberry explains the enduring popularity of lightweight, quilted, Puffa-style bubble jackets

ABOVE LEFT: Lipstick red classic bomber jacket, about £90, by Puffa (01473 658000). Red and cream striped poloneck, £39, by Sisley (0161-929 9259). Black satin stretch trousers, £59.99, by French Connection, 249 Regent Street, W1 (0171-580 2507)

ABOVE RIGHT: Navy quilted fitted anorak, £70, by French Connection (as before). Gold stretch bootleg hipsters, £110, by Joseph, 77 Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-823 9500). Burgundy rib poloneck, £50, by Ameya Arzuaga, from a selection at Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-734 0123)

ABOVE: Black reversible padded jacket, £104, by Naf Naf, from selected stores nationwide (0171-580 7463). Red and white patterned wool zip-up cardigan, £90, by Diesel, Neal Street, Covent Garden, WC2 (0171-833 2255). Black jersey flares, £29.99, by Kookai, Kensington High Street, W8 (0171-937 4411)

The anorak has been one of the most derided garments of our time. It was a staple of 1970s childhoods, then suffered a backlash in the 1980s, failing to fulfil the decade's desire for glamour. Only now, in the 1990s, have Britpop bands such as Oasis and Blur given it back some ironic streetcred.

But for the past 15 years a variant on the anorak has been quietly building a reputation for itself. About four years ago, it exploded into the public consciousness and became a hot fashion item. Now it is back again.

Thousands of people now own a Puffa-style jacket — a lightweight, quilted short coat. Only a fraction of those possess something that could legally go by that name — Puffa is both a registered trademark and the name of the company that started the whole thing — but the style has been relentlessly copied, most notably by Donna Karan.

So instead of being merely a passing trend, the bubble jacket now appears to be here to stay. It drifts in and out of high fashion, but it is always there, and always evolving.

This year, many of the jackets are cropped. The bright colours of last year are still around, but there are also subtler, fashion-led colours such as brown and ecru. Jackets with a draw-string waist have had their day.

They are a far cry from the early designs. The very first Puffa, cut by Penny Hay, the wife of an Army officer, on her kitchen table, then hand-stuffed in the garage, was a straight-forward practical garment. It got its first outing at the Badminton Horse Trials in the late 1970s, then made its way to the ski-slopes.

At the start of the 1980s, Naf Naf got in on the act, but as David Ward, the company's marketing director, says: "The early designs were not that flattering. They were long, straight from the shoulder, and had a drawstring. It was a way of keeping warm."

At that time, outerwear simply was not regarded as fashionable. But all that changed with the emergence of "sports-wear" at the start of the 1990s. Even if you didn't ski, and rarely walked more than half a mile, it was important to look as though you might. To be fit is also to be fashionable.

Last year was a particular high for the anorak, with Donna Karan producing high-tech metallic parkas, and Miucca Prada bringing out a curvy, white quilted jacket that inspired a fur-trimmed Warehouse style that is in the shops this winter.

But a few glam jackets excepted, things are more down-to-earth this winter. Short and bright is one direction, short and sporty is another: then there are longer flatter styles.

Many of the Puffa-styles now look less puffy than before. "That's deliberate," says David Ward of Naf Naf. "Fashion is going longer and leaner, and we've tried to reflect that by reducing the puff."

At the kitsch end of the spectrum, there are also tight, shrunken 1970s-style padded jackets, which are perfect for going clubbing, and compliment the return of drainpipe jeans.

LEFT: White and blue striped padded 1970s-style ski jacket, £147, by Diesel (as before). Blue and white striped zip-up cardigan, £49.95, by Trigger Happy (0171-736 0732). Blue stretch capri trousers, £40, by French Connection (as before)

ABOVE: Orange waisted cropped jacket, £49, by Benetton, from selected branches nationwide (0171-731 4557). Cream chunky-knit zip-front cardigan, £69, by Jigsaw, 126 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 4484). Brown bootleg hipsters, £44.95, by Naf Naf (as before)

Photographer **Steve Poole.** Stylist: **Deborah Brett.** *Hair and make-up:* **Helen Bannon** at Mandy Coakley

THREE OF A KIND

The ankle boot is this season's favourite footwear, with high but sturdy heels turning the trusty paddock boot into an elegant partner for today's trousers. HEATH BROWN

FAR LEFT: Square-toe brown leather high ankle boot, £56.99, Ravel, 184 Oxford Street, London W1 and branches nationwide (0171-631 0224)

MIDDLE: High sheen dark brown leather Halston ankle boot, £110, Pied à Terre, 102 High Street Kensington, London W8 and branches nationwide (0171-376 0296)

LEFT: Square-toe tan leather ankle boot, £135, Russell & Bromley, 24 New Bond Street, London W1 and branches nationwide (0171-499 2621)

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GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q I have an upright Irish yew, 9ft tall. Would you recommend tying it loosely at intervals to keep the upright shape and protect it from damage? We do not get much snow but it is quite windy here. — Mrs V. Hartlees, Chichester, West Sussex.

A Binding upright multistemmed trees like this is really only worthwhile against snow damage. Wind keeps them well exercised and strong, unless there is a perpetual disfiguring sea gale from one side.

The upright Irish yew, *Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata' and its golden forms, are better at withstanding snow, but where snowfall can be heavy it is worth protecting them. On young plants, loops of heavy string at 1ft-2ft intervals are sufficient protection, and best taken off again in summer, to develop strong stems. Alternatively you can use large-gauge plastic netting tied around the tree.

Q I have picked some deadheads off a passion flower and hope to grow plants from them. There appears to be one hard oval seed in each flower. What do I do? — Mrs B.H. Cook, Cannington, Somerset.

A It sounds as if your plant has not set seed. The fruit of the passion flower look like orange eggs hanging on the ends of the side shoots. It sounds as if all you have here is unfertilised flowers.

Q My ten-year-old castor oil plant, *Fatsia japonica*, has transformed a dark corner where nothing would grow. Every November it is covered in white flowers, but never gets the black berries I see in other gardens. Why is this? — Mrs G. Stephen, Claygate, Surrey.

A Fatsia is good grown out of doors in a shady, sheltered place. Like ivy, its cousin, it is a late flowering plant — so late that sometimes the flowers never open. The flowers are bisexual and so two plants of opposite sexes are not required. In the warmth of central London fatsia does particularly well. I suspect your plant is in too chilly a spot to open properly and be fertilised.

Can you give it a little more sun to its head, while leaving the main part of the bush in shade? And are you sure that birds are not taking the fruit?

Q I have been trying to find acanthus plants in central London for my father who lives in Clapham. Where could I find them locally? — Mrs P. Hutchinson, Crawley, Sussex.

A Acanthus does badly through summer, so you rarely see it in garden centres after the spring, which, in fairness, is the best time to plant it. Try Clifton Nurseries, Little Venice, London W9 (0171-289 6851) or buy it by mail order from most good nurseries. If you are after plenty of flower, look for *Acanthus spinosus* rather than *A. mollis*.

● *Readers should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend,* The Times, *1 Pennington St, London E1 9XN. We regret that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.* The Times *also regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.*

With planning for the new season in mind, **Jane Owen** suggests items to buy and places to go

ISOBEL CAMERON

Bedgebury Pinetum, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent, has arranged a Jack Frost Jaunt on Sunday, January 19 to show off some of its 1,500 conifer cultivars or varieties

See the world's best conifers

FOR LOVERS of trees, Bedgebury Pinetum near Tunbridge Wells, Kent, has arranged a Jack Frost Jaunt to examine some of its 1,500 conifer cultivars or varieties on Sunday, January 19. Bedgebury holds the National Conifer Collection, which has been rated as the best conifer collection in the world by the International Dendrological Research Institute. It is arranged in families and includes 14 trees which are rare or endangered. The jaunt starts at 2pm. For advance tickets (£2, children £1.20) contact Nadene Thomas, the education ranger, on 01580 211044. The Pinetum is open daily 10pm-dusk.

Snow go

HERE are some snow rules: try not to walk on the lawn in frost or snow or the imprints of your feet will sometimes be burnt into the grass. Gently shake snow from the branches of trees to prevent them breaking but otherwise leave it in place to vanish naturally.

When the snow loses its novelty, head for one of the botanical garden hothouses or for Plantasia in Swansea which has a 1,000 tropical plants. Right now the red-flowered powder puff plant (*Calliandra haematocephala*) is blooming, and the banana is about to flower.

Plantasia Parc is at Tawe, Swansea (01792 474555).

GARDENER'S UPDATE

Child's play

CHILDREN like to garden (see feature opposite). Why not get them to clean out an old eggshell, stuff it with cotton wool and plant cress. The project is suggested by Funwins Bumble Bee, Unwins' children's division, which has a 1997 "Seeds for Kids" range at 99p each. For *Times* readers, the Cress Curly Top is yours for 50p taped to a piece of card and sent to Cress Offer, Unwins Seeds, Histon, Cambridge CB4 4ZZ.

Scents sense

THE VOCABULARY for describing scents in the garden is limited, but the Chelsea Physic Garden's Perfume Lectures in London should help. On January 16, Dr Peter Wilde will talk about English flower oils and a new way of making them, and on March 20 Anthony Dweck will lecture on plants, perfume and people. Tickets (£4) on 0171-352 5646.

Get-together

THE NATIONAL Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG) will hold its national conference on June 6-8 at Glasgow University, and will include some tours of gardens. To attend the conference (£45 all-inclusive for three days) you have to join the NCCPG. If you do so via the Strathclyde Group, membership costs £6 and offers access to sales of rare plants, newsletters and a chance to visit private gardens of interest to plantsmen and women. Ring Pat Jordan on 0141-644 4712.

Wheely chic

NO HOME should be without a plant skate — a galvanised aluminium, 35cm-diameter plate on wheels for the easy movement of plants (£10.50). It is sold through the Garden Trading Company along with other chic accoutrements, such as a shepherd's crook and lantern in aluminium (about £21.50), and an aluminium drinks table, comprising a monopod spike with a small table-top (about £50). For stockists, ring the Garden Trading Company (01993 823595), a wholesaler which does not sell direct.

Hosta costa

MISS WILLMOTT of Warley Place, whose gardening skills were famous at the turn of the century, used to carry a loaded revolver in her handbag and, during a feud involving the equally renowned gardeners Sir Frank Crisp and E.A. Bowles, stood outside the Chelsea Flower Show handing out mocking pamphlets about Bowles. I am glad to see this high-spirited approach to gardening lives on in the librarian of the British Hosta and Hemerocallis Society, Mike Shadrack. Members who flout the trust-based library system (books are sent by post and have to be returned with a cheque to cover postage) have been told: "I'll send round the boys. And my boys are real." Those brave enough to join (£8 a year) should write to the honorary secretary, Roger Bowden, Cleave House, Sticklepath, Okehampton, Devon EX20 2NL.

FIND OF THE MONTH

GOOD NEWS for Dr Wyn Philip, of Argyll, and other readers who have written to me about trimmers.
Complaints run as follows: leads are bothersome on electric model; petrol-powered models are heavy and rechargeables last only about 25 minutes maximum. Dr Philip's now-defunct American Grasswip trimmer was light, long-lasting and rechargable but the firm is no longer operating and the batteries no longer available.
Into the breach has come Wolf, the garden tools company, which has offered to import its rechargable trimmers from Germany for £100 for any *Times* reader.
The trimmers are not normally available in the Britain. For details, phone 01989 767600 and ask for the sales office.
Alternatively, Wolf's petrol trimmer is expensive (£259) but has a metal blade which will work in overgrown areas.
From garden centres.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

HELLEBORES. No particular hellebore because these miraculous, exotic-looking plants all have their place, some producing large buttercup-shaped flowers in the dead of winter. Colours range from white through pink to purple, creamy-yellow and crimson. They are greedy feeders, trouble-free and seed freely. One of the national collections is held in Kent by Kemal Mehjdi at Hadlow College. His favourite is *Helleborus arguitifolius*, with pale green cup-shaped flowers and good dramatic foliage typical of all hellebores. His growing tip is to cut away any of last year's foliage, even at this late stage, so that pest and disease isn't harboured for next year's growth.
The collection is open to the public on Saturday, February 22, 10am-3pm, Thursday, February 27, 10am-3pm and Saturday, March 1, 10am-3pm at Hadlow College, Hadlow, near Tonbridge, Kent TN11 0AL (01732 850551).

Experts' choice of the plants for 1997

Plants come and go in fashion. Here are ideas for this year

THE FASHIONABLE career of any plant has a distinct beginning, middle and end. It will appear in one or two forward-looking gardens and specialist nurseries one year, and the next it will be in the gardens of all the keenest amateurs. Then it will come on sale as the darling of the year in garden centres. *The Times* asked six eminent gardeners to predict the up-and-coming plants to look for in 1997.

Nigel Colborn, *BBC Gardeners' Question Time* panellist and novelist

I just love the multiheaded annual sunflowers 'Prado Red' and 'Prado Yellow'. They are a sensible size and such gorgeous colours.

Penelope Hobhouse, author and designer

I am really keen on *Cerinthe major* 'Purpurascens' at the moment. I brought back seed from Greece and it has about five different varieties. I grew it last year in groups of about 12 each and will do so again this year.

Roy Lancaster, author and broadcaster

Bergenia emeiense is a newly introduced Chinese perennial with evergreen leaves and snow-white flowers which appear early in the year — too early should frosts arrive — but it is a superb pot plant for a cool greenhouse. It has been crossed with later-flowering hardy hybrids.

Rosie Atkins, award-winning editor of *Gardens Illustrated*

To name one plant is hard but I, too, have become interested in *Cerinthe major* 'Purpurascens'. It's such an astonishing blue. It's meant to be an annual, but the seedlings have come through at night in temperatures as low as -6C.

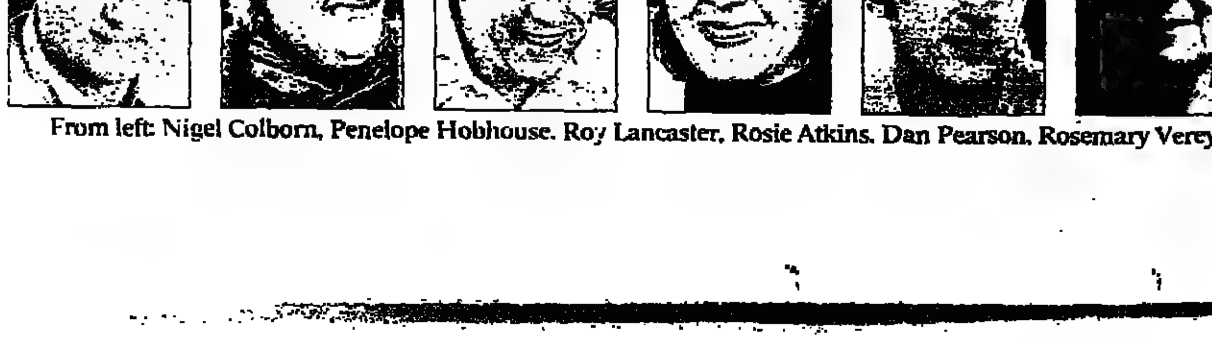
Dan Pearson, designer and *The Sunday Times* gardener

My plant of the year is the purple-leaved elder, *Sambucus niger* 'Guincho Purple'. It makes a fast dark background in sun or shade and has beautiful creamy midsummer flowers.

Rosemary Verey, author and broadcaster

My favourite for the future is *Veronica peduncularis*. I was given a plant of it on a trip to Washington State in America. It's a rich blue and flowers all summer. It grows to about 8in high and spreads very neatly. It certainly looks good in pots or at the edge of borders.

STEPHEN ANDERTON



From left: Nigel Colborn, Penelope Hobhouse, Roy Lancaster, Rosie Atkins, Dan Pearson, Rosemary Verey

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Ros Drinkwater, a photographer, cases a family house in London where a superstar might hide from the paparazzi

Beverly Hills near Fulham

ROS DRINKWATER

Beth Moon relaxing in the huge first-floor drawing room, which has exposed brick walls and a Canadian pine floor. Her husband, Peter, looks down from a gallery window

Liz Hurley, the actress, is house-hunting in Chelsea, London SW3. If she can bring herself to stray 290 yards into Fulham, SW6, her search could be over: not only is Britannia Studios a home fit for a star, it is paparazzi-proof.

An American superstar has put this claim to the test. She rented the house for a month and liked it so much that she came back the next year and brought her family. The owners discreetly declined to reveal her identity, but a local tradesman let the cat out of the bag, saying: "Think mega-hair, mega-talent and a one-time Motown connection."

The property is short on glamorous history. A builder's yard at the turn of the century, it was used as a taxi garage until being abandoned in the 1970s. In the late 1980s, the architect Nigel Crump spotted the potential of the vast, derelict site in the middle of a four-streets-square residential block. He designed three grand houses around a beautiful garden and called it Britannia Studios.

I decided to check-out the house's privacy for myself. Armed with a telephoto lens I planned two visits, the first timed to coincide with the milkman (you'd be amazed at how many VIPs take in their own milk), the second at the voyeur's favourite hour: tea-time, when lights are on and curtains have yet to be drawn.

It was all a waste of time, I discovered. From the street, the house is invisible, bar one chimney that seemed to be smirking.

Finally, I was on my way in. Having identified myself to the close-circuit television security system, the huge doors in the street parted to allow me to drive through something akin to the barbican of a medieval castle. Further in, more huge steel gates swung open and the owners, Peter and Beth Moon, stepped out to greet me.

Inside, the instant impression is Beverly Hills in the best possible taste: acres of space, huge skylights that, even on a winter's day, flood the whole house with light.

Its greatest charm is that the rooms appear to career off in a dozen directions at once, giving vistas from gallery windows, bedrooms under the eaves, and three outdoor areas on differing levels with different characters. The huge ground-floor kitchen leads out to a cobbled, walled patio: the second-floor guest suite has a roof terrace which, screened for privacy, is ideal for sunbathing, with the bonus of cityscape views. The garden brings the country into the heart of the city.

The Moons use the ground-floor reception area as a combined drawing and dining room. The table seats 14, but such is the space that a sit-down dinner for 60 is no problem at all.

The *pièce de résistance* is the large, first-floor drawing room. The Moons' taste is minimalist, but the exposed, mellow brick walls, open fire and restored timber flooring — Canadian Maple rescued from a defunct Merseyside cotton mill — would suit any style, any period. The room is big enough to accommodate at least four separate seating areas, but with simple, twin sofas, is surprisingly intimate.

The couple bought the house five years ago. "We liked the idea of privacy, a safe place for the children we planned, and we fell in love with the space," says Mrs Moon, an American. "In the States, we tend to build wide rather than tall, so I love the way the whole house is contained on two-and-a-half levels. We moved here from a five-bedroom Georgian terraced property on five levels, where I felt as though I was permanently going up and down stairs."

With four-year-old Dylan, followed by twins Isabel and Alexandra last year, plus a steady stream of visiting relatives, the family now needs more bedrooms, hence the decision to move.

Mr and Mrs Moon both work from home. In the first-floor study overlooking the garden, Mrs Moon designs stationery and invitations for special events. Mr Moon, a retired off-shore fund manager, takes care of his own portfolio from a bank of computers in the ground-floor study. Entirely sound-proof, it was built as a recording studio and has perfect acoustics. There is oodles of floorspace where he can practise tai-chi exercises, despite half the room being taken up with what looks like a swimming pool for a very small person.

The pool is, in fact, the swimming machine, as the agent's brochure has it: "The controlled-current pool where you swim in place at your own pace." When going full blast you can swim as many "lengths" as you like without actually moving.

"I get up from my desk, turn on Pink Floyd at full volume and pop into the swimming machine for ten minutes," Mr Moon says. "It's the perfect way to unwind."

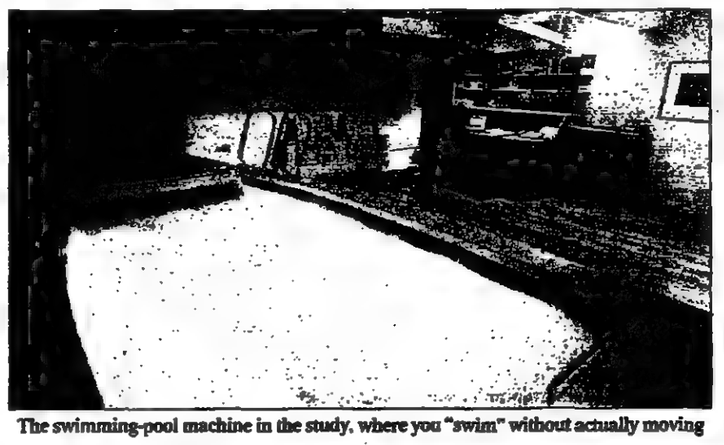
What will the Moons miss most when they sell? "The peace; no traffic noise," Mrs Moon says.

"On a practical level, the house is child's play to run," Mrs Moon adds. "Our cleaner's first reaction was horror. 'I'll never get round *all this*,' she said, but she keeps it clean as a pin in under six hours, twice a week."

"Then there are the sunsets," Mr Moon says. "On summer evenings the sun floods through the circular window and bathes the drawing room in a golden glow."

Could Miss Hurley possibly ask for anything more?

● *Agent: Chesterfield (0171-581 5234)*

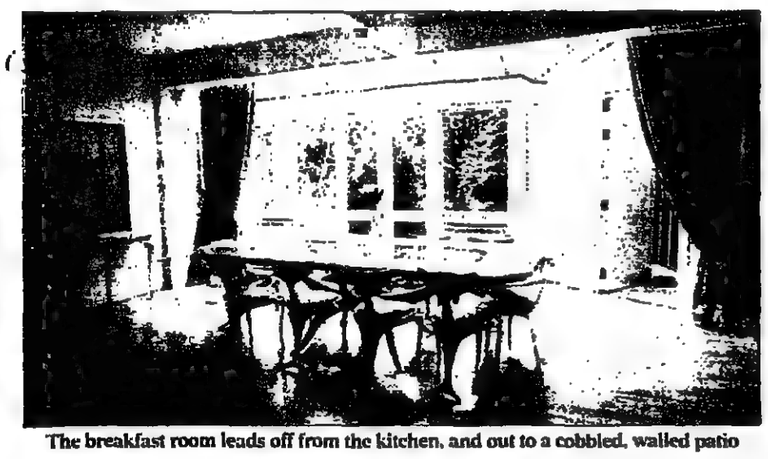


The swimming-pool machine in the study, where you "swim" without actually moving

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

1 Britannia Court, Britannia Road, Fulham, London SW6 ● **Price:** £2.25 million for a 990-year lease, plus a share of the freehold ● **Setting:** a spit from both the Fulham and the King's roads, with private off-street parking for five cars ● **Size:** huge, floor area of 5,180 sq ft. Five bedrooms en suite, a guest suite and a nursery suite ● **Shopping:** Sainsbury's five minutes away

Front of the house by night



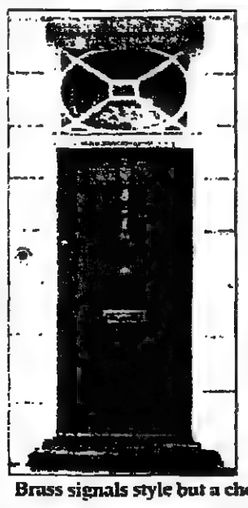
The breakfast room leads off from the kitchen, and out to a cobbled, walled patio

SELLING POINTS — FRONT DOORS

They call it kerb appeal. That little something that makes people slow down, look again and feel a warm, anticipatory tingle down the spine. Yes, your front door could be your house's biggest pulling factor.

While it may be fanciful to call the front door the eye of the soul, it is almost certainly the focal point of the front of a house. It is the feature upon which a prospective purchaser fixes their eye as they make their first approach. And it can — intentionally or otherwise — suggest a lot about the rest of the house: shabby, peeling paintwork arouses suspicions about dry rot and damp; smart, polished door furniture hints at a careful, house-proud owner. Neither may be true, but it could be the difference between getting a buyer over the threshold and a no-show. A fresh coat of paint is a cheap and quick make-over but take care over colour. A survey by the Alliance and Leicester Building Society found brown and purple front doors to be instant turn-offs (signalling, respectively, dull and definitely dodgy), while blue was the most popular — smart, hints of nobility.

Natural wood, stained or varnished, has a classic, dignified appeal, but could look dull if the rest of the house has few distinguishing features. However, rushing out to buy a glossy white, mock Georgian, panelled door with fanlight and brass fol-de-rols for your between-the-wars, pebble-dashed semi is definitely unwise. The style of door should subtly enhance the property, not punch potential buyers in the eye. A jarring note makes them nervous about what other stylistic "improvements" they might find.



Brass signals style but a cheap front door repels buyers

Check the door furniture. Bells, knockers, handles and letter-boxes can improve appearances at very little cost. If, for years, you have been meaning to change that wretched little aluminium handle, now is the time. A bit of polished brass confers instant style and dignity, and original stained glass panels either within the door or above it add authentic appeal. But think carefully before you go the whole hog of carriage lamps and bell-pulls. These are fine if you do happen to live in a coach house or country manor, but are best avoided in a 1970s maisonette.

Door security is an important consideration for any purchaser, but should only be mentioned in passing conversation. Do not make a feature of it. A prospective viewer will grow anxious if kept standing on the doorstep while listening to heavy bolts being drawn back, chains unpadlocked and a barking-mad Doberman. It does not put them in a positive frame of mind about the area, let alone the house.

Likewise, yelling through the letter-box to "shove on the door, mate, it always sticks in the winter" is likely to put them on red alert for other signs of poor housekeeping. Do your maintenance now.

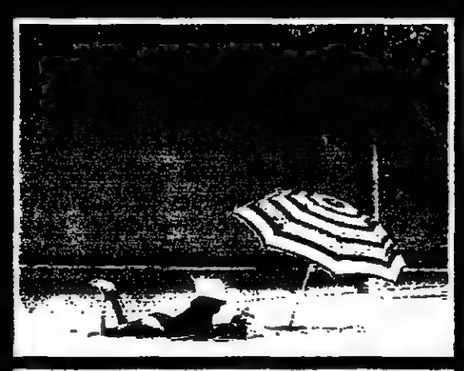
A decent quality timber door costs between £150 and £200, more if it includes glazed panels. Plastic doors (around £320) score highly for ease of maintenance and security, but may have aesthetic drawbacks. If you live in a conservation area, contact the local planning department to see if there are any restrictions. Enforcement notices to remove plastic doors have been served on conservation area home-owners who disregarded local planning codes.

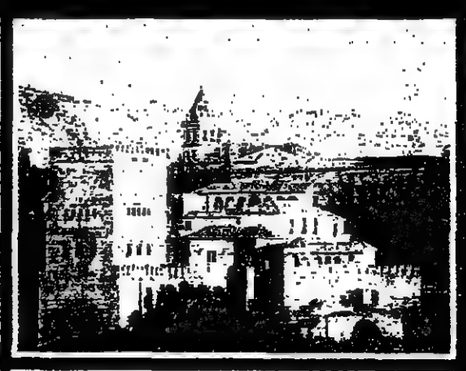
One final point: never, ever send viewers round to the back door, even if it is the one everybody uses. These people have come to buy your home, not deliver the coal.

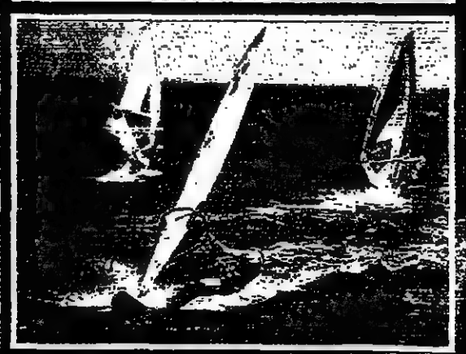
HELEN PICKLES

THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE PERFECT SUMMER HOLIDAY







Whether your destination is the Continent, the British Isles, or oceans away, your quest for the ideal summer holiday begins with an important 10-part series in The Sunday Times expanded Travel section tomorrow

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

هكذا من الأصل

The first in a monthly selection of readers' letters shows the need for a mix of ingredients in the country

Your countryside needs you

DOWN TO EARTH

PAUL HEINEY

It is a new year, and with it comes news that on the first Saturday of every month we shall feature in this column the letters you have written on rural topics. About time, too: because the letters are varied, mostly sensible, and sometimes worthy of wider circulation. But before we go any further, may I offer you my text for 1997, which I ask you to bear in mind as you read or write the letters? It is this: *the countryside is a crazy mixture, and that is why it works.*

If you, like me, are struggling to make sense of the debate surrounding every aspect of rural life, and trying to decide on which side of the fence you will fall, there are two books worthy of close examination.

The first is called *Our Countryside*, in which "real country people explain the problems that rural Britain faces..." The contributors range from Jack Charlton, of footballing fame, to the millionaire novelist Frederick Forsyth. Real country people? More scribblings from the Range Rover-owning classes? Bah, humbug. But hang on. Consider them just part of the *mixture*, and put them to one side for a moment without condemning them.

Then pick up Elizabeth Handy's book *Behind the View — Portraits of a Norfolk Village*. This is a collection of the author's photographs of the village of Bressingham in south Norfolk. Her starting point was a collection of 85-year-old photographs belonging to her neighbour, Charlie Butler. It was clear that many of the village features — shops, houses, cottages — had changed little in the intervening years. But what inspired Handy was not the permanence but the nature of the change that had taken place on the other side of the doors. Who were now the villagers of Bressingham, and what did they do?

"Like a well-darned sock," she writes, "it still looks the same, still works as well, although much of the wool has been replaced by newer stuff." She pictures — alongside the parish council, the local mechanic and postman, and the Church Bell Restoration Committee — businessmen, artists, advertising consultants and an international lawyer. Her broad conclusion is that Bressingham, and villages like it that survive and thrive, do so because of "the mix of our differences".

So back to Forsyth and his fellow countrymen. They are the latest strands of expensive wool to be darned into the weary sock. But they should not be dismissed just for being new. Their views are as important as — though not necessarily more important than — those of the oldest inhabitant with a wheelbarrow, or the gardener with a spade. They, too, are part of the *mix of differences* that makes the countryside thrive.

Forsyth recognises this and, in *Our Countryside*, writes, "The countryside is neither a honey-suckle wreathed chocolate box cover, nor a charnel house populated by sadists, nor a soft option existing on subsidy handouts, nor an ecological coincidence. This countryside of yours is multifunctional as well as good to look at. It plays host to a wildlife pool of awesome variety, but also of hair-trigger delicacy where humans exist in harmony ... with animals, birds and fish."

So does it not follow that, providing you maintain the mix, you will preserve the countryside? Does not Handy's Bressingham prove that by ensuring a mix of jobs and incomes, philosophies and opinions? The only people to be deeply suspicious of are those who believe that they and their kind alone own the countryside. They might be farmers or lifelong residents, newcomers or romantics, sportsmen or animal sentimentalists. All have to accept the need for a mix.

Now to your letters. After a reader wrote of the damage the badger was doing to gardens, poultry and graveyards, I raised the wider question of what happens when the protection rightly given to certain species puts them in such a strong position that they inflict damage to the point where they once again need controlling?

Has anyone yet addressed the question of what happens when conservation has fulfilled its ambitions?

To any of you who misunderstood my reply, I am sorry. I like badgers, but I doubt I will convince Mrs Hocking, of Constantine, Falmouth, who wrote:

"I am amazed and shocked at Paul Heiney's diatribe against wildlife, particularly badgers. Badgers are creatures which have been persecuted, tortured, killed for sport for many years. In our part of Cornwall, we have long taken an interest in badgers. We used to see eight or nine every watch, but now there are regularly only three. So where are these huge pest numbers? And is it not because man has developed roads, built over and destroyed setts, and driven many badgers away from their normal haunts that there are now the rogue badgers that kill poultry? Anyway, man does far worse things to poultry than any badger."

An even angrier Mrs Smith bites my head off writing that:

"Heiney knows nothing at all about badgers. Badgers are NOT predators, and if he is worried about his chickens he should shut them up at night in a well-built hut. Unfortunately, badgers are attacked and tortured by ignorant criminals. There are, of course, other animals which, when hungry, will kill."

ELIZABETH HANDY

Postman, 1910, from *Behind the View — Portraits of a Norfolk Village*, by Elizabeth Handy. Bressingham's inhabitants are very different today

Mercy, mercy. I only asked a question, never passed an opinion as to whether badgers were angels of mercy or the devil reborn. And therein lies the problem: there can be no solution to this or any country problem as long as extremists shout loudest, and any animal trade or type of resident is crudely demonised or lavishly overpraised.

I offer the next letter with some trepidation, for a deluge of anti-field sports letters is a force to be reckoned with. But read what Christopher Pryor, of Sheffield, writes, and have it in the back of your mind as you read the letter that follows:

"Do the well-meaning and usually urban conservationists have any appreciation of how easily the balance of nature is upset? Do they realise that the countryside looks as it does today as a result of true conservationists: field sportsmen and women who have known how important it is to maintain the balance between predator and prey?"

Some will be uneasy with the notion that a *true conservationist* could ever carry a gun. But as well as the thorny question of the badgers, I mentioned reports of the conserved otter population of North Uist causing problems to poultry keepers. Paul Yoxon, of the International Otter Survival Fund, explains the facts, and at the same time proves that a little sense goes a lot further than a heap of principle:

"The otter population in North Uist has been pretty constant for the past 50 years. The problem was one rogue otter which was killing poultry. It was recommended by the Scottish Office that it be humanely trapped and relocated. The suggestion of a cull is dangerous, as it sets a precedent for relaxing protective measures against wildlife."

That letter has blown a breath of cooling Hebridean air through this overheated argument: one otter's felony admitted and dealt with, residents and wildlife happy. But again — and I only ask the question — if the careful balance of predator and prey has traditionally been in the hands of country sportsman for generations, why have country sportsmen now become the object of such hate? The easy answer is because so many hitherto silent urban dwellers now voice opinions. But is there something else, too? Is there, perhaps, something about some of those who shoot and hunt today, and their attitude to their fellow countrymen, that has also changed?

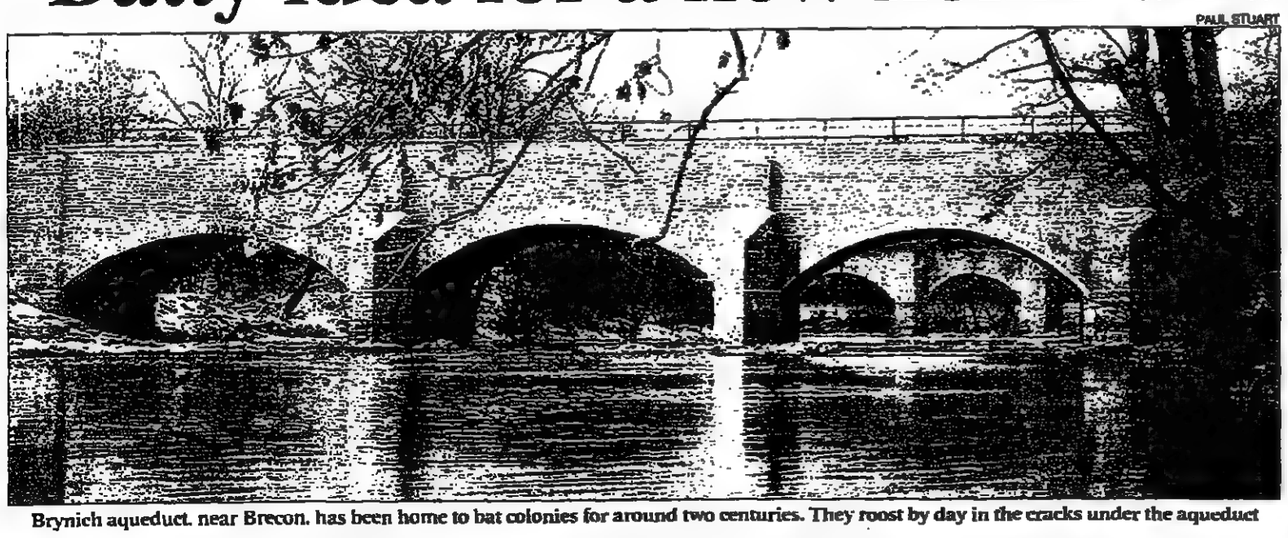
Before you jump to any conclusions, I am not one of them. But I am willing to broker some of your thoughtful answers.

● *Readers should write to Paul Heiney, Weekend*, The Times, *1 Pennington St, London E1 9XN.*

● Our Countryside *(Pearson Publishing, £19.95). Behind the View (£10, including p&p, available from Old Hall Cottages, Bressingham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2AG. All profits to village charities).*

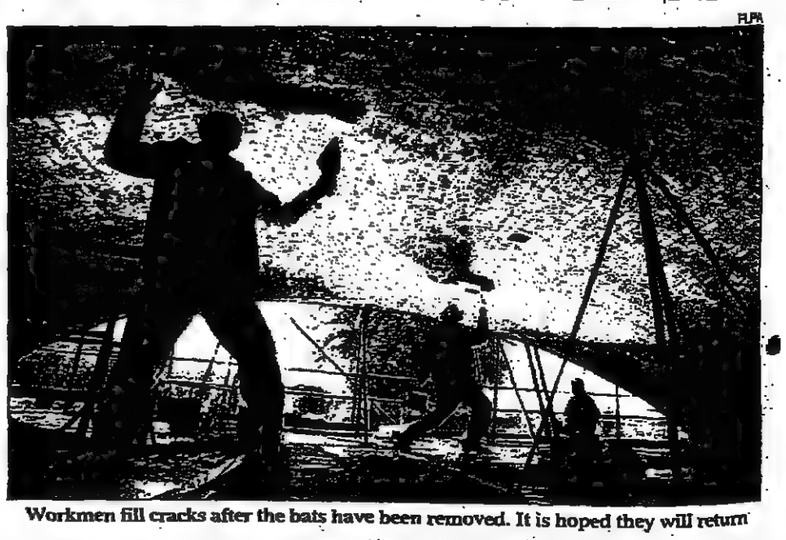
Batty idea for a new home underneath the arches

PAUL STUART



Brynich aqueduct, near Brecon, has been home to bat colonies for around two centuries. They roost by day in the cracks under the aqueduct

FLPA



Workmen fill cracks after the bats have been removed. It is hoped they will return

The aqueduct needed restoration. But what could the workmen do with its bat colony? **Derwent May** reports on an innovative solution

Above the foaming River Usk just below Brecon, in Powys, strides the magnificent four-arched Brynich aqueduct. It is a scheduled Ancient Monument and was built between 1797 and 1812 to carry what is now the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. The water still flows above the river, and the canal has been developed in recent years by British Waterways into a popular place for summer boating

But underneath the arches lives a more mysterious population: numerous bats, including pipistrelles, the Daubenton's or water bat, and the large noctule bat. They fly and feed over the canal at night and, probably for two centuries, have roosted by day in the cracks under the aqueduct.

Now a huge restoration of the aqueduct is under way. It has involved squirting grout — a kind of mortar — under pressure into all the cracks in the stonework so that it floods through the structure and hardens. But what, asked the ecologists at British Waterways before work started, shall we do about the bats? How shall we prevent them being immured in their holes, and how shall we provide homes for them again when the work is done? After consultations with wildlife groups they came up with some inventive solutions to each problem

On a mild winter's day, with snow up above us on the Brecon Beacons but all the hillside streams flowing merrily, I went with Jonathan Briggs, the British Waterways' conservation ecologist, to see what they have done.

We went first to the little village of Betws, not far from Crickhowell. Here lives Peter Smith of the Brecknock Bat Group, a former computer programmer who is now a freelance ecology consultant. At his small cottage, with a mountain towering above it and an alder-fringed stream at the foot of his garden, he showed us the devices he had made to help the bats.

The first was the one for getting the bats safely out of the aqueduct structure. It was a short length of drainpipe with a kind of footless sock on one end of it. Last September, just before the restoration work began, devices like this were fixed over all the holes and cracks under the aqueduct arches. The idea was that the bats, on coming out in the evening, would drop down and find their way out of the the sock, but not be able to get back in again.

It must have looked like a whole nursery of Christmas stockings hanging there. And it worked. Where all the bats went is not known, but it is hoped that this winter many have found a hibernating place in other bridges and trees along the canal. To rehouse some of them, Mr Smith developed a device he had used before to provide bats with rousting places in trees. This is what he calls a "bat belfry" — a concrete cylinder with a removable "stopper" at one end shaped so that bats can squeeze past it. Mr Smith and his bat group have hung these in the past from tree branches, and they have quickly been taken up as bat residences. They are warmer than holes in trees, where the wind can blow in. Now, under the arches of the aqueduct, a powerful electric stone-cutter has been used to cut holes in the restored stonework, and the new cylindrical concrete homes have been fastened inside them.

STEVE HILL/NEWSTEAM

Pipistrelle bats live at Brynich with two other species

Bats will sleep packed up tight against each other. But in some of his cylinders Mr Smith has inserted wooden partitions, so that the bats can have a choice of apartment.

We left him to his village idyll, and drove on through luxuriant countryside to the aqueduct. For part of the way we followed the lower reaches of the canal. Although the water has been drained from the channel in the aqueduct itself, because there is more work going on up there, there was still plenty of water in this stretch of the canal, fed by hillside streams.

We crossed a bridge over the Usk and the aqueduct came into sight. It is an enormous bridge, high above the river, which here runs through high, wooded banks. The river curls and creams over countless rocks below, but in places is quite shallow, and we were able to walk out a little way under the first arch of the aqueduct on some flat stones.

There they were, the round, dark holes, the entrances to the new bat homes. They were installed while there was still scaffolding under the arches, but now that has gone and the river swirls under the arches unimpeded again. Some of the solid, cylindrical chunks of stonework that had been cut out to make way for the new homes lay on the bank.

The chief engineer on the site, led us up the riverbank to the top of the aqueduct to look at the empty channel — a lorry stood in it, looking very out of place. The task of fortifying the channel will go on throughout the winter, because it must be ready to take cruising boats again in April.

The engineer, too, was interested in nature. He had been watching the fieldfares in the trees and the dippers on the river stones, and he told me how workmen had transported freshwater crayfish to safety from the channel and from an overflow stream.

So now everybody is awaiting spring and the time the bats stir themselves from hibernation. Will they come back to the aqueduct and fall on their new homes with delight? There's good reason to believe that they will.

هكذا من الأصل

Trendy home designers say minimalism is the thing, but it seems the British don't want to follow their lead

Where clutter spells comfort

DES JENSON

From a radiator with *trompe-l'oeil* (above left) to the ornate sitting room (above right), Richard Lowe (below, in his "Egyptian" hallway) has left no space untouched, even the bathroom (below right)

The couple are pictured in a design magazine in what passes for a sitting room: a wilderness of white walls and bare boards, punctuated only by a cream Eileen Gray rug and a single aurum lily in a tall Murano vase. They are unsmiling, but radiate satisfaction with their elegantly empty home.

Around them are no *objets*, no ugly encumbrances such as waste-paper bins and television sets, and, of course, no mess.

The text informs us that they have two children, who must have been bundled away into designer cupboards along with all their toys the moment the photographer came up the drive.

Sound like anyone you know? Hmm, I thought not. The post-Post-Modernist fashion for minimal, ascetic interiors may be *le dernier cri* from Sydney to Paris but it shows all the signs of finding the British a much harder nut to crack. It's not that we don't admire the spare, sparse spaces we see in trendy design magazines, we may even aspire to them, but as a nation we secretly find all that emptiness a little bit terrifying, and will fill it up with a profusion of texture, pattern and colour.

British style abhors a vacuum. What we have always preferred to simplicity, if the truth be known, is According to the film stylist Sasha Schwerdt, the impulse towards minimalism is something more often desired than fulfilled. The impulse to clutter is deeper and more powerful. "All clutterers like to think of themselves as not and, in our heart of hearts, we would love to eliminate it sometimes," she says. "But minimalism just seems like such an un-personal way of living: you can't see any signs of the individual. I find clutter much more rewarding creatively."

Mrs Schwerdt's house is big on signs of the individual. A born magpie, she collects corks and milk bottle tops, string and coloured wool, and lets them spill cornucopia-style out of cardboard boxes.

At any one time she may have three weeks' of unread newspapers and a year of *Country Life*. And her two children are following in her footsteps. Her son has the scarf that her father once gave her when she was ill, and her daughter is the proud possessor of her mother's childhood wellingtons. "When I say 'Throw that away, it's too small', she says, 'No, no, keep it for my child'."

A recently launched interiors magazine, *Wallpaper*, is one of the main proponents of the new Modernism. But Tyler Brûlé, the Toronto-born editor, admits that, at times, it is an uphill struggle. "Modernism has to be presented in a way that says yes, it's a viable option.

"The UK suffers from a perpetuation of the same idea, the same over-stuffed sofas. That's partly because in Britain you don't have the grand apartments of Vienna or Antwerp, the wide open spaces that lend themselves to modernism. Here, it's all town houses converted into seven little flats. The architecture [illegible] a sense of cosiness."

The magazine's sumptuous photographs are always of spaces dressed for the occasion, never of real people's homes. Mr Brûlé calls this "reader friendliness". Depending on your point of view, it could also be a tacit admission that, when it comes to lean and clean, real people just don't measure up.

Minimalism requires total dedication to the sort of self-discipline that borders on the monastic — and an awful lot of storage space. Even then, the chaos of modern life can so easily ruin the best-laid floor plans of mice and men.

"The architect John Pawson might design your interiors, but Domino's Pizza will still deliver your meal in boxes too big for the kitchen pedal bin," as *Wallpaper* puts it.

Lucinda Chambers, the fashion director of *Vogue*, long ago learnt to stop repressing her love of complexity over simplicity, though she confesses to the occasional bout of clutter guilt. "If there's a space, I'll cram things into it. I've held three car-boot sales, but there's still no room," she says. She and her husband, Simon, a BBC producer, have just had an extension built, and are now laying bets on how empty it will stay. "I'm a collector, always have been. I started collecting curtains at 15. I don't know whether I thought I was going to live in Hampton Court... But I love colour, texture, pattern, and I'm eclectic. I fall in love with things. There are a lot of things out there with my name on them."

Ms Chambers points out that, unlike the continentals who might change their decor with the same regularity as they change their wardrobe — "one minute it's all colour, then it's a pebble and a piece of driftwood" — the British are not used to thinking of their homes as susceptible to fashion. "We want a setting that's comfortable and fairly familiar to us. Friends of mine have houses that do not look dissimilar to those of their parents."

There is a certain no-nonsense practicality at the heart of *le style anglais* because, as she says: "If you have a concrete block and you're the fashion photographer Nick Knight, then you can have a single iris in a pot. But if you have a house crammed with children, then minimalism isn't for you."

Clutter is not only natural to some of us, it can be a vital means of self-expression. Richard Lowe, an art director, has decorated his small flat in Soho, central London, in the Egyptian style, inspired by the tomb of the chief artisan of the City of the Dead.

The place is a riot of hieroglyphics, stencilled animal figures and giant fake insects that creep across the walls, which are painted to look like dried, cracked mud.

"Some people would be driven mad by the dizziness of it all, but for me it is very relaxing," he says.

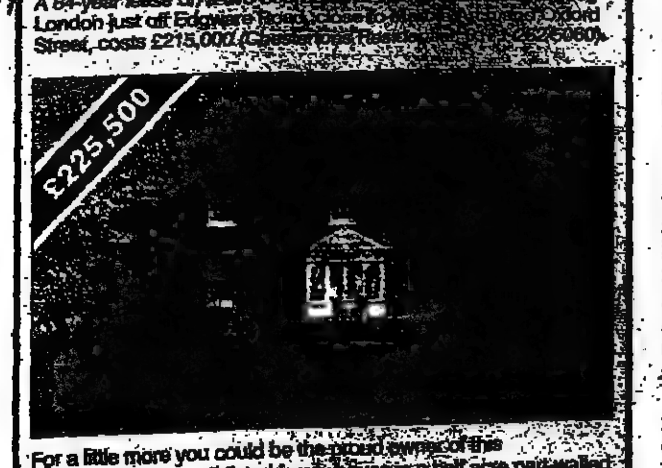
Stuffed to the gunwales with masks, puppets, rugs and *objets d'art* that Mr Lowe has gathered on his travels, it is a 1990s Modernist's idea of a nightmare. Like all good clutterers its owner has had moments of self-doubt, and sometimes ponders a redecoration in white-walled, bare-floored Japanese style. There would only be one problem with that. "Where would I store it all?" he asks.

PAUL RICHARDSON

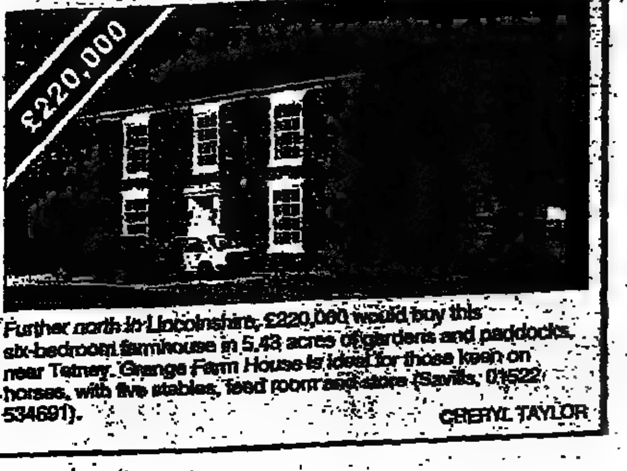
HOMESWAP

What you can get for [illegible]

A 84-year lease on a [illegible] London just off Edgware [illegible] Oxford Street, costs £215,000 (Chestertons [illegible]).



For a little more you could be the proud owner of this six-bedroom Grade II listed family house in a half acre part-walled garden, in the broadland village of [illegible], near Great Yarmouth, Norfolk (Bidwells, 01603 763939).



Further north in Lincolnshire, £220,000 would buy this six-bedroom farmhouse in 5.43 acres of gardens and paddocks near Tetney. Grange Farm House is ideal for those keen on horses, with five stables, feed room and store (Savills, 01522 534691).

CHERYL TAYLOR

Read all about it – on the wall

Decorating with a quality wallpaper can be costly. Decoupage is an artful alternative

With good quality wallpaper costing about £20 for a 30ft roll, papering a room has become expensive. But for those who do not want to use the paintpot, there are alternatives. Walls can be decorated with all sorts of paper printed with words and pictures.

The Georgians understood this when they began gluing prints on to their yellow walls to create elaborate print rooms.

In New York, a new spin on the print room has grown among cost-conscious decorators, who are using magazine pictures, gift wrapping, brown paper, the pink pages of the *Financial Times*, greetings cards and postage stamps to brighten their walls.

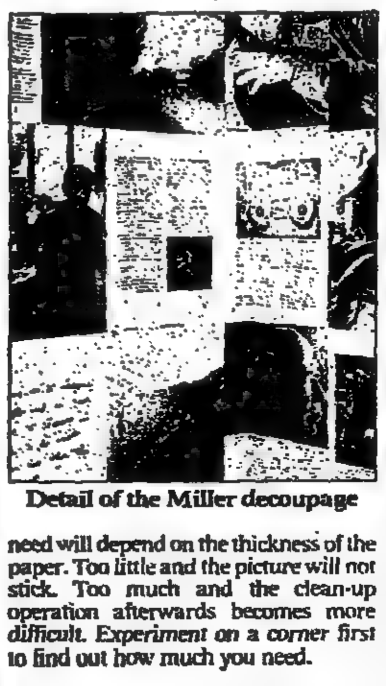
The method is called decoupage, and the beauty of it is in the editing. Any sort of paper can be used, so long as it is combined with other elements in an imaginative way. The late Hiram Manning, a Boston-based decoupage fan of the 1960s, would even use pages of the *National Geographic* magazine and Hershey chocolate bar wrappers.

Following the basic steps, even a novice can achieve a stunning effect. One such beginner was Michael Weber, who eight years ago decided to update the bathroom of his apartment in SoHo, New York, with a patchwork of 9in by 12in pages taken from one of Henry Miller's illustrated albums. Photos of Miller's wives, scribbled pages of manuscript and Cocteau-like doodles now amuse Susan Povich, a lawyer and the flat's present occupant. She particularly likes one of Miller's aphorisms, which has been glued to the wall at eye-level: "The thing is to become a master and in your old age to acquire the courage to do what children did when they knew nothing."

Mr Weber concentrated on the three walls enclosing his bath tub. A small hallway, a lavatory or even one wall of the kitchen are all ideal spaces. Decorating a living room with cutouts would need great patience, however.

RICHARD POHLE

Susan Povich's bathroom, decorated with pages from a Henry Miller album



Detail of the Miller decoupage

For a project like Mr Weber's, where a page has to be neatly removed from the book with one clean cut, a pair of paper shears is needed. To be really professional, the elements to be pasted on to the wall should be sealed first. This prevents smudging — essential with newsprint — and offers protection from stains or discolouration caused by the glue or any finishing coats of varnish. Spray or brush on the sealer in a well-ventilated area.

Next, prepare the walls. Any cracks or bumps should be filled and sanded, because once the paper is up and the sealer is on there is nothing you can do about an irregular surface.

Wallpaper paste is fine for the sort of job Mr Weber was undertaking, but the amount and type of adhesive you need will depend on the thickness of the paper. Too little and the picture will not stick. Too much and the clean-up operation afterwards becomes more difficult. Experiment on a corner first to find out how much you need.

To make sure you know exactly where the pictures are going, Blu-Tack or Sellotape them to the wall before gluing starts. Allow overlap on pictures, because the paper will shrink once it dries.

Once the pictures are up, clean the surface immediately with a damp sponge dipped in hot water. For an over-sealant, Mr Weber used a polyurethane varnish, which is solvent-based and excellent for a rapid build-up of coats. But, because the coats dry quickly, it is easy to leave visible brush marks on the surface by accident. Make sure that you brush neatly from top to bottom, so that if brush marks are noticeable they do not distract the eye. Remove any stray blobs with paint thinner.

This sort of varnish takes on a yellowish hue after a while, which will make your collage look as though it has been there for ever.

Miss Povich says she is happy with the result. The wall gets soaking wet every day, but the paper never bubbles or leaks, and cleans easily with washing-up liquid.

Miller would doubtless be thrilled to be sharing a bath with yet another naked woman.

LOIS LETTS

PROPERTY NEWS

■ THE Crown Estate is offering yearly leases on six flats at No 1 Palace Green, overlooking Kensington Palace. Originally built in 1869 for the Honourable George Howard, later the ninth Earl of Carlisle, the house was converted into flats in the 1950s. Prices from £500 to £3,000 per week. Knight Frank, 0171-937 8203.

■ THE number of households with negative equity fell by more than half during 1996, according to the latest figures from Nationwide, with about 800,000 now affected, compared with 1.7 million at the end of 1995. Nationwide expects the bulk of negative equity to be eliminated over the next two years.

■ ST JOHN's Jerusalem, a Grade II* listed house and Scheduled Ancient Monument at Sutton in Hone, Kent, has been sold on a 99-year lease by the National Trust, through Strutt & Parker, which was quoting in the region of £500,000 for the leasehold interest. The Knights Hospitallers of the Order of St John of Jerusalem established a commandery and church on the site in the 13th century.

■ *SELLING Your Home*, (£4.99) the latest in the Collins Pocket Reference series, will be published on January 14, and offers advice on everything from choosing an estate agent to selling at auction and receiving offers and conveyancing.

■ THE Joseph Rowntree Foundation has published the first study of the affects of permanent sites for travellers on nearby residents. Most households questioned had no specific complaints and, although some claim that property values have been affected by the sites, there is evidence of building taking place within 50 metres of one site boundary.

● *Contributors: Amanda Loose and Cheryl Taylor*

It's the ultimate catch

Homes with their own fishing rights are in great demand among anglers, says **Lynne Greenwood**

Boleside Fishings (above) includes 55 acres of the River Tweed for £3.5 million. Hugh Dalgety (below) owns a stretch of the Taw and Mole in Devon

The Prince of Wales, Jack Charlton and Ian Botham love it. Spike Milligan is quoted in a television advert for Guinness, saying: "Fishing is complete and utter madness."

For those with a lifelong passion for angling, however, owning a stretch of river is the ultimate catch. Property developer Hugh Dalgety, who owns a stretch of salmon and sea trout fishing at the junction of the rivers Taw and Mole in Devon, *believes that fishing rights are* "the most satisfying piece of property anyone could ever purchase".

"You get to know your river so well that know exactly where the fish will be lying, the heights of the water and a myriad other things," he says. "And *it makes me enormously popular* with my piscatorial friends — I spend the winter going to dinner parties given by people saying 'thank you for the fishing'."

Houses with a stretch of river or fishing rights independent of a *property are sought after by those* with a passion for the sport. Allan Macpherson-Fletcher, a consultant for agents Strutt & Parker in the Highlands, says: "Fishing is a life-long passion and when a stretch of water goes on the market, it can generate huge interest. Those people buying areas of water are not doing it *for investment, but their love of* fishing."

Even non-anglers like a property that includes a stretch of river because it adds to the value of the house, says Mr Macpherson-Fletcher, who owns a three-mile stretch of *the River Spey, which has been in the* family for more than 200 years.

In Scotland in particular, fishing on a sporting estate is a useful amenity. "I know of one estate owner who only had loch fishing, and so bought into a syndicate to enable him to offer salmon fishing," he says.

Before buying, his advice is to *check records as far back as possible,* to identify cyclical fluctuations, although this may be difficult if a river has been fished infrequently.

The House of Daviot Estate, near Inverness, a residential, agricultural and sporting estate, including single-bank salmon fishing, is for sale for about £750,000. The one-and-a-half mile stretch of the River Nairn, split into three beats, where the open season runs from February 11 to October 7, is recognised as a good small salmon and sea trout spate river, but the records are scarce because the owners have not fished regularly.

In contrast, detailed records are available for the Boleside Fishings on the River Tweed in *the Borders, a two-mile double-*bank beat with 11 pools offering fishing from February to November. Widely recognised as one of Scotland's finest salmon rivers, the beat has a ten-year average of 445 salmon and grilse. A fisherman's cottage, *fishing house and 55 acres of riverbed* and bank are included in the £3.5 *million price.*

When Mr Dalgety bought his stretch of the Taw and leased an adjoining stretch of the Mole, he inherited meticulous records, which he has maintained. "Both are spate

rivers and have been affected badly by the drought," he says. "But there's something very rewarding to your soul about just being on the river." David Smith, *a horticulturalist who* insisted that his new home must be *close to water, is also discovering the* pleasures of owning a stretch of river, even when the fish are not biting. "I see otters — whole families of them — kingfishers, herons and dippers: the place is full of wildlife," says Mr Smith, who *moved* a year ago to a house near Crediton, Devon with a 575-yard single-bank stretch of the River Taw, a five minute drive from the house.

As a lifelong angler, who first *fished as a ten-year-old in north* London, he says he could never have envisaged one day owning his own stretch of river. "Once you have smelt the river, thrown a stick with a maggot on the end in the water and pulled out a fish, you're hooked for life. It's wonderful to have your own stretch of water. Even though I'm *only a beginner, I was down there fly-*fishing, day and night, last season."

As there were no records from the previous owner, he conducted his own research among local fishermen and the owner of a local angling shop. "A hotel which offers fishing *owns up and downstream of me and* a syndicate owns the opposite bank," *he says. It is important to know your* neighbours on the river and who fishes the opposite bank if you are buying a single bank. Buyers are warned that if neighbouring stretches are owned by an angling club, it is likely that dozens of fishermen will arrive every weekend. Careful maintenance of riverbank and bed is also necessary. Trees must be carefully trimmed, banks maintained and the river bed cleared of any obstructions.

Poaching can be a problem, although the availability and relatively low price of farmed salmon has reduced potential returns. Most owners are philosophical about individual local poachers stealing a salmon for the freezer and admit that policing the river is almost impossible.

"Word soon gets around if someone's boasting in the village pub about a catch on a private stretch of water," says Mr Smith. "You can let it be known in your own way that you're not very happy."

● *Fishing seasons vary around the country. For details of legislation, including seasons and stocks, contact the local office of the Environment Agency in England and Wales or the local fishing boards in Scotland and Ireland.*

● *House of Daviot Estate, Inverness-shire, and the Boleside Fishings in the Borders, contact Strutt & Parker, Edinburgh (0131-226 2500).*

FOR SALE

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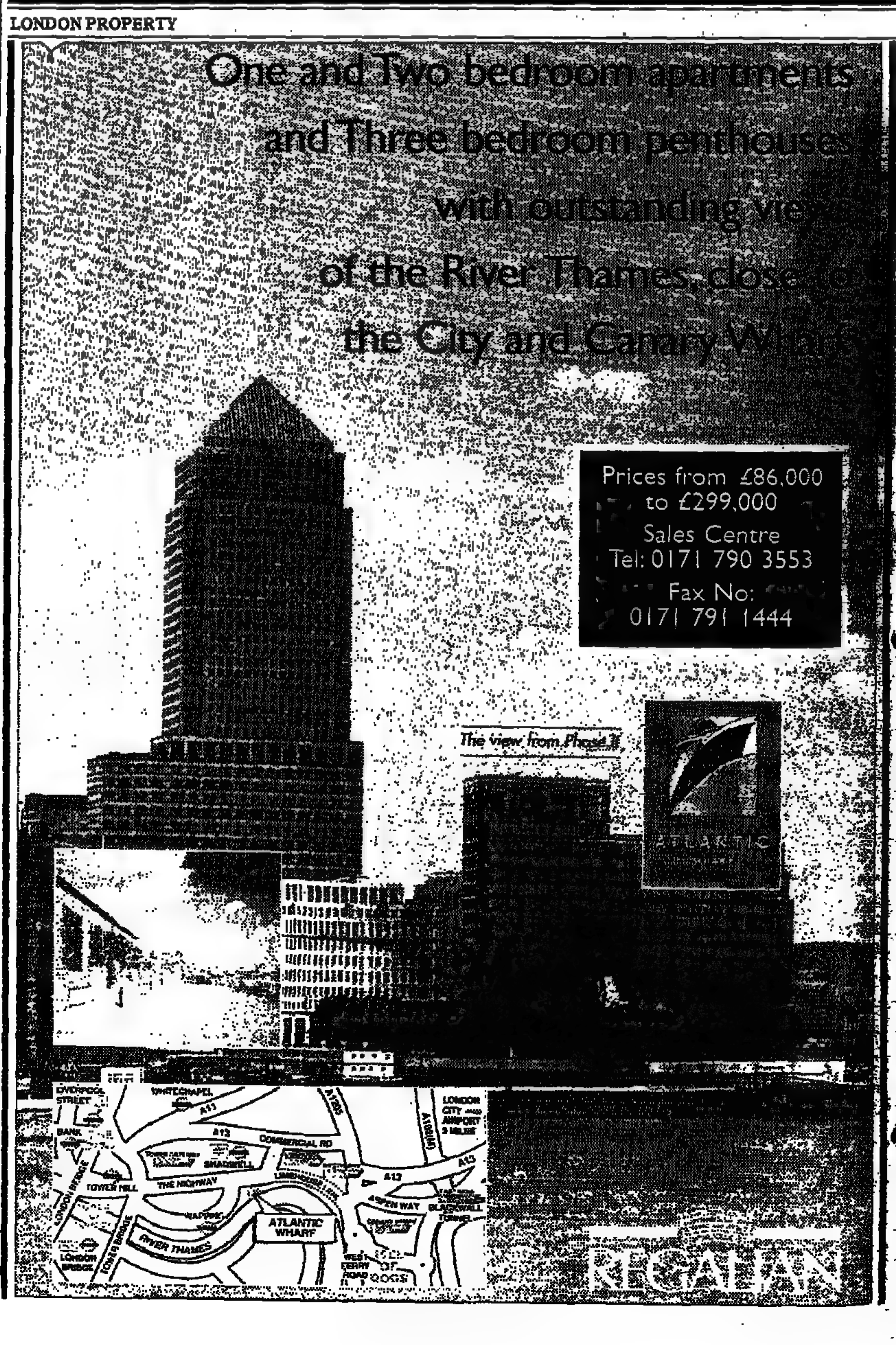


هكذا من الأصل

Ros Drinkwater, a photographer, cases a family house in London where a superstar might hide from the paparazzi

Beverly Hills near Fulham

ROS DRINKWATER

Beth Moon relaxing in the huge first-floor drawing room, which has exposed brick walls and a Canadian pine floor. Her husband, Peter, looks down from a gallery window

Liz Hurley, the actress, is house-hunting in Chelsea, London SW3. If she can bring herself to stray 290 yards into Fulham, SW6, her search could be over: not only is Britannia Studios a home fit for a star, it is paparazzi-proof.

An American superstar has put this claim to the test. She rented the house for a month and liked it so much that she came back the next year and brought her family. The owners discreetly declined to reveal her identity, but a local tradesman let the cat out of the bag, saying: "Think mega-hair, mega-talent and a one-time Motown connection."

The property is short on glamorous history. A builder's yard at the turn of the century, it was used as a taxi garage until being abandoned in the 1970s. In the late 1980s, the architect Nigel Crump spotted the potential of the vast, derelict site in the middle of a four-streets-square residential block. He designed three grand houses around a beautiful garden and called it Britannia Studios.

I decided to check-out the house's privacy for myself. Armed with a telephoto lens I planned two visits, the first timed to coincide with the milkman (you'd be amazed at how many VIPs take in their own milk), the second at the voyeur's favourite hour: tea-time, when lights are on and curtains have yet to be drawn.

It was all a waste of time, I discovered. From the street, the house is invisible, bar one chimney that seemed to be smirking.

Finally, I was on my way in. Having identified myself to the close-circuit television security system, the huge doors in the street parted to allow me to drive through something akin to the barbican of a medieval castle. Further in, more huge steel gates swing open and the owners, Peter and Beth Moon, stepped out to greet me.

Inside, the instant impression is Beverly Hills in the best possible taste; acres of space, huge skylights that, even on a winter's day, flood the whole house with light.

Its greatest charm is that the rooms appear to career off in a dozen directions at once, giving vistas from gallery windows, bedrooms under the eaves, and three outdoor areas on differing levels with different characters. The huge ground-floor kitchen leads out to a cobbled, walled patio; the second-floor guest suite has a roof terrace which, screened for privacy, is ideal for sunbathing, with the bonus of cityscape views. The garden brings the country into the heart of the city.

The Moons use the ground-floor reception area as a combined drawing and dining room. The table seats 14, but such is the space that a sit-down dinner for 60 is no problem at all.

The *pièce de résistance* is the large, first-floor drawing room. The Moons' taste is minimalist, but the exposed, mellow brick walls, open fire and restored timber flooring — Canadian Maple rescued from a defunct Merseyside cotton mill — would suit any style, any period. The room is big enough to accommodate at least four separate seating areas, but with simple, twin sofas, is surprisingly intimate.

The couple bought the house five years ago. "We liked the idea of privacy, a safe place for the children we planned, and we fell in love with the space," says Mrs Moon, an American. "In the States, we tend to build wide rather than tall, so I love the way the whole house is contained on two-and-a-half levels. We moved here from a five-bedroom Georgian terraced property on five levels, where I felt as though I was permanently going up and down stairs."

With four-year-old Dylan, followed by twins Isabel and Alexandra last year, plus a steady stream of visiting relatives, the family now needs more bedrooms, hence the decision to move.

Mr and Mrs Moon both work from home. In the first-floor study overlooking the garden, Mrs Moon designs stationery and invitations for special events. Mr Moon, a retired off-shore fund manager, takes care of his own portfolio from a bank of computers in the ground-floor study. Entirely sound-proof, it was built as a recording studio and has perfect acoustics. There is oodles of floorspace where he can practise tai-chi exercises, despite half the room being taken up with what looks like a swimming pool for a very small person.

The pool is, in fact, the swimming machine, as the agent's brochure has it: "The controlled-current pool where you swim in place at your own pace." When going full blast you can swim as many "lengths" as you like without actually moving.

"I get up from my desk, turn on Pink Floyd at full volume and pop into the swimming machine for ten minutes," Mr Moon says. "It's the perfect way to unwind."

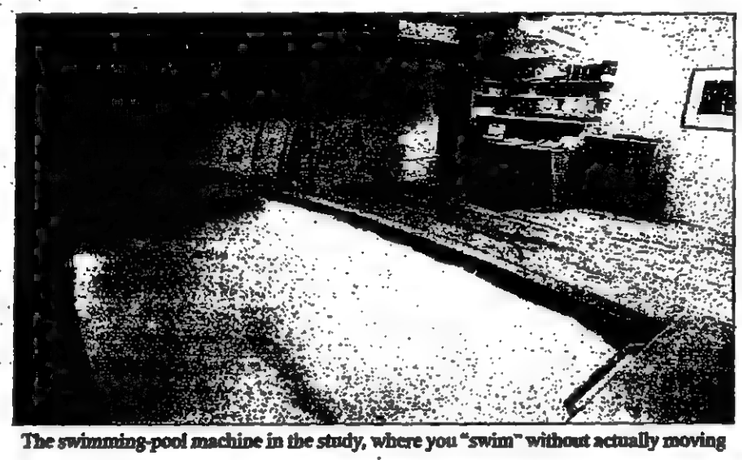
What will the Moons miss most when they sell? "The peace; no traffic noise," Mrs Moon says.

"On a practical level, the house is child's play to run," Mrs Moon adds. "Our cleaner's first reaction was horror. 'I'll never get round all this,' she said, but she keeps it clean as a pin in under six hours, twice a week."

"Then there are the sunsets," Mr Moon says. "On summer evenings the sun floods through the circular window and bathes the drawing room in a golden glow."

Could Miss Hurley possibly ask for anything more?

● *Agent: Chesterfield (0171-581 5234)*



The swimming-pool machine in the study, where you "swim" without actually moving

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

1 Britannia Court, Britannia Road, Fulham, London SW6 ○ **Price:** £2.25 million for a 990-year lease, plus a share of the freehold ○ **Setting:** a split from both the Fulham and the King's roads, with private off-street parking for five cars ○ **Size:** huge, floor area of 5,180 sq ft. Five bedrooms en suite, a guest suite and a nursery suite ○ **Shopping:** Sainsbury's five minutes away

Front of the house by night

The breakfast room leads off from the kitchen, and out to a cobbled, walled patio

SELLING POINTS — FRONT DOORS

They call it kerb appeal. That little something that makes people slow down, look again and feel a warm, anticipatory tingle down the spine. Yes, your front door could be your house's biggest pulling factor.

While it may be fanciful to call the front door the eye of the soul, it is almost certainly the *focal point* of the front of a house. It is the feature upon which a prospective purchaser fixes their eye as they make their first approach. And it can — intentionally or otherwise — suggest a lot about the rest of the house: shabby, peeling paintwork arouses suspicions about dry rot and damp; smart, polished door furniture hints at a careful, house-proud owner. Neither may be true, but it could be the difference between getting a buyer over the threshold and a no-show. A fresh coat of paint is a cheap and quick make-over but take care over colour. A survey by the Alliance and Leicester Building Society found brown and purple front doors to be instant turn-offs (signalling, respectively, dull and definitely dodgy), while blue was the most popular — smart, hints of nobility.

Natural wood, stained or varnished, has a classic, dignified appeal, but could look dull if the rest of the house has few distinguishing features. However, rushing out to buy a glossy white, mock Georgian, panelled door with fanlight and brass fol-de-rols for your between-the-wars, pebble-dashed semi is definitely unwise. The style of door should subtly enhance the property, not punch potential buyers in the eye. A jarring note makes them nervous about what other stylistic "improvements" they might find.

Check the door furniture. Bells, knockers, handles and letter-boxes can improve appearances at very little cost. If, for years, you have been meaning to change that wretched little aluminium handle, now is the time. A bit of polished brass confers instant style and dignity, and original stained glass panels either within the door or above it add authentic appeal. But think carefully before you go the whole hog of carriage lamps and bell-pulls. These are fine if you do happen to live in a coach house or country manor, but are best avoided in a 1970s maisonette.

Door security is an important consideration for any purchaser, but should only be mentioned in passing conversation. Do not make a feature of it. A prospective viewer will grow anxious if kept standing on the doorstep while listening to heavy bolts being drawn back, chains unpadlocked and a barking-mad Doberman. It does not put them in a positive frame of mind about the area, let alone the house.

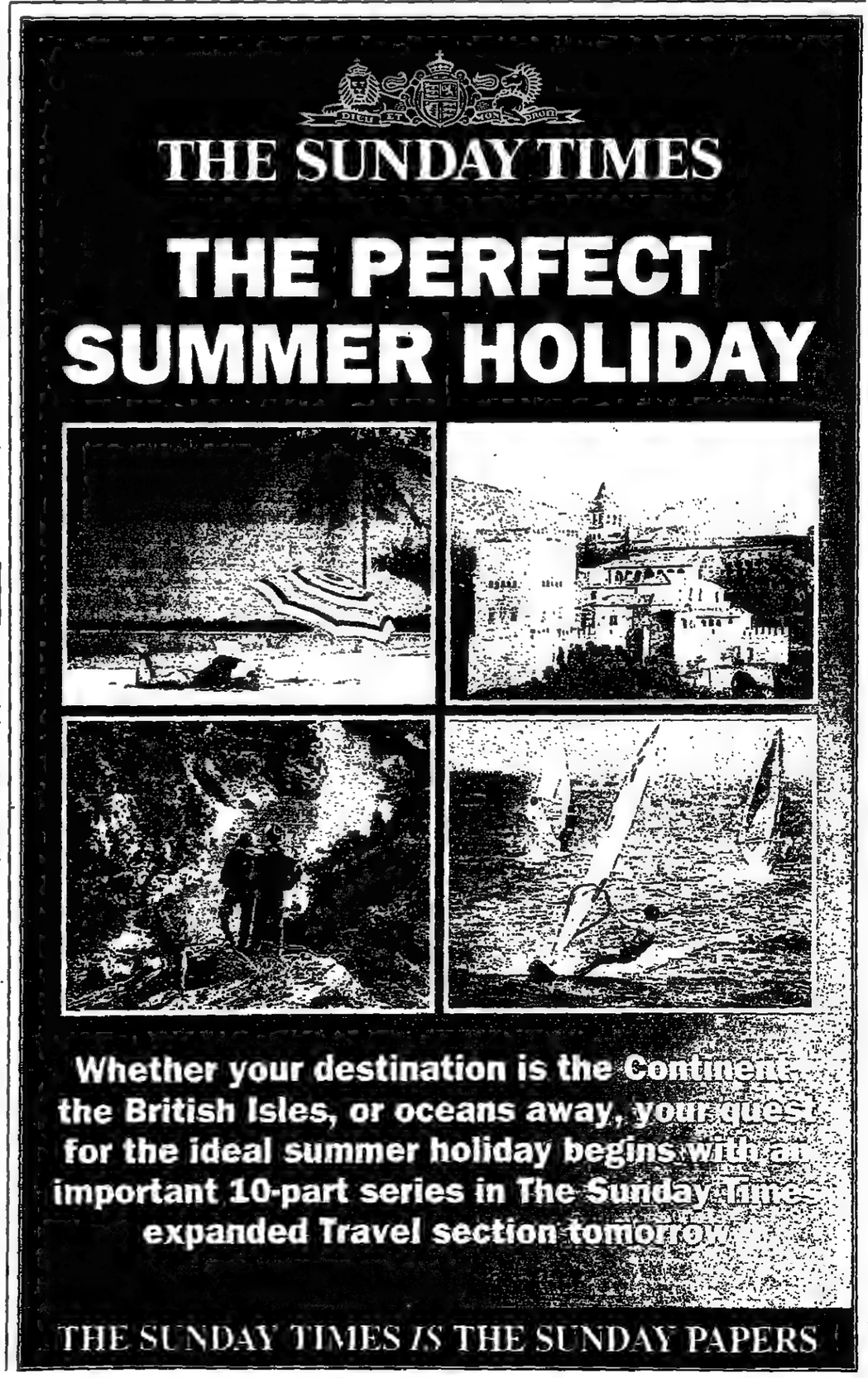
Likewise, yelling through the letter-box to "shove on the door, mate, it always sticks in the winter" is likely to put them on red alert for other signs of poor housekeeping. Do your maintenance now.

A decent quality timber door costs between £100 and £200, more if it includes glazed panels. Plastic doors (around £320) score highly for ease of maintenance and security, but may have aesthetic drawbacks. If you live in a conservation area, contact the local planning department to see if there are any restrictions. Enforcement notices to remove plastic doors have been served on conservation area home-owners who disregarded local planning codes.

One final point: never, ever send viewers round to the back door, even if it is the one everybody uses. These people have come to buy your home, not deliver the coal.

HELEN PICKLES

Brass signals style but a cheap front door repels buyers



Part of the job is being trodden on

Operating on sick horses is a tricky business and an emotionally charged situation, especially for the owners

While returning from a ride on her mother's horse, Theo, Zoe Illingworth noticed that he had a small cut on one of his hind fetlocks. She treated it and the wound seemed fine but, while jumping three days later, Theo hit the same spot again.

Within a few hours, his leg was badly swollen so she called the vet. "He took some fluid out of the joint and then told us we should send him to an animal hospital. We decided on Leahurst," Miss Illingworth says. The Philip Leverhulme Large Animal Hospital at Leahurst is part of Liverpool University's Faculty of Veterinary Science and is the busiest such hospital in Britain.

Sixteen hundred cases are referred here every year, 98 per cent of them horses. Some are from the racing world (five race courses including Aintree and Chester send injured horses to Leahurst) but the vast majority are kept for pleasure.

Horses come to Leahurst from all over the country with a variety of maladies: orthopaedic and reproductive problems, intestinal problems, respiratory disease and skin cancers. When animals are brought in they go to the examination room where they stand in the stocks, one of two wooden padded frames which are expanded or contracted to accommodate anything from Shetland ponies to shire horses.

Gouge marks on the wooden posts and hoof marks on the pad at the back of the frame show how some animals respond to pain by kicking out with their hind feet. Professor Barrie Edwards, head of the Department of Veterinary Clinical Science and Animal Husbandry and professor of equine studies, says: "Nothing is more emotional than a colic case where the horse — and that can be one tonne of shire horse — is thrashing around because it is in such discomfort, and the owner is in tears. Not only do we have to examine the horse and prepare it for the operating table, we also need to reassure the owner." He has operated on 2,500 horses with colic over the past 30 years.

"Being kicked and trampled on is part of the job. So is being called out at night for emergencies. The hospital is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Eighty per cent of colic cases arrive out of hours. They usually stay for six or seven days, and the success rate is just over 80 per cent," Professor Edwards says.

"Successful treatment depends to a great extent on recognising early on that a particular horse with colic requires an operation if its life is to be saved. Any undue delay can lead to the death of the horse from septic shock or possibly rupture of the stomach," he adds. "Horses cannot vomit, so a blockage of the small intestine will result in the build-up of large quantities of fluid in the stomach — up to 40 litres — which must be siphoned off. Horses have 70 feet of small intestine and, although we frequently remove 20 to 30 feet, they can still return to top-level competition."

A horse does not go in to the operating theatre on a trolley. The animal is anaesthetised in a padded recovery room before staff tie ropes around its hooves and hoist it onto a gantry for the short upside-down journey to the air-bedded operating table. Until it comes round, its progress is monitored through a peep hole in the door.

Liverpool is one of six universities in Britain which have either schools, faculties, colleges or departments of veterinary science. The Glasgow University vet school has just opened a computerised equine healthcare system. One of its advantages is that vets can now identify early signs of trouble in a horse's bone or joint. Radio-pharmaceuticals with a bone-seeking agent are injected into the animal and a "gamma camera" picks up images of the agent within the skeleton — the agent concentrates in problem areas — which are relayed to a screen.

Dr Mark Martinelli, equine orthopaedic surgeon, says: "We can pinpoint hot spots — areas where a stress fracture is likely to occur, and advise owners on how to avoid them." Peter Devlin from Scotsys, the company which helped develop the computer system, says: "It's a tool to assist in the diagnosis of horses but it doesn't take the place of an experienced human being."

In the future, the Weipers Centre for Equine Welfare at the vet school will store images on computer discs which have come either from using the gamma camera, from video endoscopy or ultrasound scans. The pictorial data base should benefit students as well as vets.

"We'll also be able to send images to vets via the Internet for a second opinion. It'll be a bit like the equivalent of having a ward round on the Web," says Sandy Love, the head of the Division of Equine Clinical Studies, who maintains that this is the first time that someone has tried to set up computer archiving and mailing of clinical images in the veterinary field in this country.

CHRISTIAN DYMOND

● *Large Animal Hospital, Leahurst, Neston, South Wirral L64 7TE (0151-794 6033); Weipers Centre for Equine Welfare, University of Glasgow Vet School, Bearsden Road, Glasgow G12 8QH (0141-330 5999)*

PHIL NOBLE

An anaesthetised horse is gently lowered onto the air-bedded operating table at the Large Animal Hospital in Leahurst, Wirral

ADOPT ME

Billy needs a home with an experienced family

SHAMMY is a two-year-old black male mongrel who arrived at Battersea last April. He would do well with a grown-up family. He needs owners firm enough to keep him in line but with the energy to entertain him.

BILLY is a four-year-old black and tan mongrel who has been at Battersea since March 1996. He needs an experienced family who can slowly get him accustomed to being left alone. Contact the Dogs' Home Battersea, 4 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4AA (0171-622 3626).

Shammy needs a firm and energetic owner

A VET WRITES

Q My friend's poodle, Charles, has gone blind. He gets around the house quite well and finds us in the garden when we call him, but he can't run free any longer. The vet says it's PRA, and nothing can be done. My friend is devastated. Is it quite hopeless?

A PRA is the acronym for progressive retina atrophy, an inherited and untreatable degeneration of the retina. Light reaches the back of the eye but the image is not transmitted to the brain.

When the need arises, Charles will sniff his way to a suitable tree or lamppost. He hears sound beyond our ken. He'll respond to a "silent" dog whistle — one producing a supersonic noise — when he learns his mistress is blowing it, and a titbit is waiting.

He's a normal dog with one of his many senses impaired. So don't rearrange the furniture. Then he can enjoy a slightly restricted life until the end of his natural span.

Q Gemma will be ten in April and we agreed she could have a puppy when she reached double figures. What breed should we be looking at? Or would we be better off with a mongrel puppy looking for a home?

A Choose a pure-bred pup so you'll know what shape, size and temperament it will be as an adult. Oscar Wilde observed: "All women become like their mother." So do puppies. As to breeds, think long term. It's almost certain you'll be left in charge when Gemma leaves home.

Consider a whippet, a breed that takes exercise in explosive bursts. Ten minutes at full speed in the park, then back home for a few hours' snooze, but well capable of enjoying a whole day outdoors when the opportunity arises.

Short-haired dogs take less time than cuddly, long coated ones. Working dogs — collies and gun dogs — need occupation for many hours every day. What sex? My choice is a bitch — neutered. They're gentler, more biddable and don't cock their legs on the cabbages.

Q I know cats and dogs must be vaccinated but now I hear rabbits need injections too. We have four — two neutered bucks and two does, so no possibility of little bunnies — but what about our quartet? Should they be inoculated and, if so, against what?

A Myxomatosis and viral haemorrhagic disease occur in wild rabbits and the death rate is very high. Infection can pass to domesticated rabbits carried by rabbit fleas or certain biting, mosquito-type insects.

Vaccination is possible and, if there are wild rabbits near you, think about it. Better still, ask your vet about the risks in your area.

JAMES ALLCOCK

Readers should write to The Times Vet, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.

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Martin Barrow is Deputy Business Editor of *The Times*.

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How was it for you? Electric but unsatisfying

ALTERNATIVELY SPEAKING

RACHEL KELLY

Imagine being able to treat an illness without knowing the cause. That is one of the more modest claims being made for a new machine by the name of "Bicom" developed by a German doctor.

Figures suggest that half the patients who visit doctors don't have a readily diagnosable condition. I know the feeling: tired, fed-up, listless, pale — but is that just the aftermath of too much plum pudding and brandy butter? To find the answer I booked in at the Good Health Clinic in Kensington Church Street for a session with Peter Smith, a Bicom practitioner, acupuncturist and Chinese herbalist.

The £14,000 dial-covered machine, which looks like a plane's dashboard and is the size of a box of croquet mallets, sits atop many a German GP's desk. One day, says Mr Smith, it will be as widely used as a stethoscope. Its workings are more complex but any good lab technician could learn how to operate it in a week.

The theory is this. Groups of cells give off electromagnetic frequencies. Researchers have measured fields around tissues and worked out which frequencies are appropriate for different tissues. Change the electromagnetic frequencies in the person, and it will affect their whole physiology.

Bicom checks whether your body is tuned into the correct channel by the daunting prospect of making a circuit through your body. Mr Smith promises it is painless and safe. He discreetly turned his back while I slipped off my tights. You need to be barefoot for the circuit to work.

Sitting between the machine and Mr Smith, I held an electrode connected by wire to the machine in one hand while Mr Smith touched an acupuncture point with a stylus in first my hand, then my foot. The machine then read my electrical resistance.

My small intestine, it revealed, showed high electrical resistance, suggesting some form of imbalance. This could explain feeling tired and bloated, Mr Smith said, and that absence of a peaches and cream complexion after which I so hanker.

After diagnosis came the treatment: healthy frequencies are amplified and played back into the body, or unhealthy frequencies have their peaks and troughs inverted and are then played into the body.

Individual diseases have specific frequencies, Mr Smith claimed. So hepatitis C, for example, has a particular frequency which can be corrected. He chants a mantra reminiscent of George Orwell: "Let the good frequencies flourish, and invert the bad."

I wished for that glowing complexion, so Mr Smith placed a roller electrode against my spotty face and played the correcting frequencies directly to it. I felt nothing. After all the hyperbole, Mr Smith cautioned that not all cases show quick results, and skin is especially difficult to heal. Usually patients must return every three weeks for five visits for results.

But it is said to be good at detecting and correcting food allergies and intolerances. "The machine registers the resonance of the particular food or substance, inverts the vibration, and plays back the mirror image to the patient, thereby cancelling the patient's reaction to the substance," Mr Smith explained.

Viruses, bacterial infection, neuralgia, nerve pain, and postoperative pain have all responded well in clinical trials held in Germany, according to Mr Smith.

He prescribes waiting to see if the machine has any effect over the next few days, but meanwhile he recommends a clutch of pricy supplements to cheer up the intestine and improve my sluggish digestion, which in turn could aid my complexion: ten different Chinese herbal medicines costing £34 for three weeks' supply to be drunk twice daily. "And don't use an anti-bacterial soap. They kill good bacteria too."

He advised more physical exercise and trying to increase my "relaxation periods" to counteract a stressful life. "We used to think that the best approach was to stop being a 'type A' person: someone who is driven and a high achiever. Now we think the best approach is to add these two elements to their life." My husband said afterwards that he could have told me that and it wouldn't have cost £60. There were so many prescriptions that it has proved difficult to follow them. The approach may be holistic, but it is also unrealistic for many of the busy, stressed-out patients who approach Mr Smith.

● *Peter Smith, the Good Health Clinic, 182 Kensington Church Street, London W8 4DP (0171-221 2266). For further information on UK practitioners, contact Bicom UK on 01938 556800.*

A patient undergoing Bicom, which is used to correct the body's unhealthy frequencies

Bicom

- **What it is:** a high-tech device that works with the body's own electromagnetic rays to correct unhealthy frequencies and aid good health.
- **Advantages:** non-invasive and painless.
- **Disadvantages:** difficult to tell if it works.
- **Cost:** £60 for a first appointment of one and a half hours, £36 for a follow-up appointment.

هكذا من الأصل

Handful of dust that speaks volumes

PERSONAL LIFE

Turning into your parents seems to me an alarming but more or less unavoidable characteristic of middle age. I didn't expect to become any of my great aunts quite so soon, but I think it's happening.

Great Aunt Violet was given to portentous pronouncements, some of which — such as that the Editor of *The Times* was a Bolshevik — have not proved to be immutable truths. But I'm starting to find sneaking sympathy with her view that books — "nasty dusty things" — were something she would simply not allow in the house.

I recognised the Great Aunt Violet in myself when my husband came home from the children's school fair triumphantly bearing a complete *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the 1946 edition, for only £10. Dust isn't something that exercises me particularly. It's just that the final frontier, space, has run out. Books do furnish a room. In this house they furnish most of the walls, several of the floors, they prop up all the bits of furniture with wonky legs, and make interesting wobbly towers on quite a few chairs. There are several boxes of them in the attic and usually half a dozen or so in the car. There are a few thousand more in my husband's office which he thinks are coming home when he retires.

Some of them are good. Others less so, and I can't see why they're not dispensible. Will our children thank us for passing on biographies of Dolly Parton, the early works of Wilbur Smith and collected photographs of greenhouses? Doubtful, yet the mad accumulator I married can't bear to jettison any of them, even those we have two or three copies of. Jumble sales come and go and I feel like the director of the British Library who had to get an Act of Parliament passed so he could stop having to accept every single edition of *Pride and Prejudice* whenever the publishers cashed in on a new BBC dramatisation.

Some of the duplicates have their own shelf, optimistically called Swaps. I've been able to work out some of the other filing categories — Cookery is easy enough and it's in the kitchen: our lucky visitors can browse round a spare room furnished with Sport and Hardback Fiction, K-S — but most of the system completely escapes me. Woe betide the amateur who, having removed a book from its appointed place, attempts to bypass the third pile at the bottom of the stairs (Waiting to be Filed) and put it back themselves.

I know some people have to live with collectors of rare beer bottles or the skulls of small mammals. And books must seem fairly harmless compared with Art Deco lamps or some of the other ghastly bric-à-brac Elton John has crammed into his various mansions with the years. But at least he has mansions, and even he sometimes has a go at clearing the decks before he gets up steam again.

The truth is, at this time of year, with the house groaning under the latest tidal wave of plastic stuff for children to leave lying about, all I want is to shuffle some of this mortal baggage onto the first rag and bone cart. I want minimalism. soon. Not to mention that we're sitting ducks for some lunatic insurance assessor to come by to say all these great works have to be covered at replacement value. I don't even know how I came by *Surfing Subcultures* in the first place. It's probably an excellent read but would I go out and hunt down another copy if we were burgled? I think not.

The real trouble is that I can't get anyone to sympathise. They don't see piles of books; they see a library. Once they know someone is a willing victim, friends and family will spend many happy hours scouring second-hand shops before Christmas and birthdays for more arcane volumes of prewar cricket autobiography.

And anyway the sum of human knowledge is contained in these volumes, I was told during the tantrum about the encyclopaedia. Or at least human knowledge where it stood in 1946: "Look, isn't it interesting to see how many pages there are on steel? And anyway I bet any second-hand book dealer would give me £100 for this lot." It's no use saying go and find one then or what are compact discs for? Books are holy. Try to suggest thinning out surplus literature and certain sorts of people, of whom I seem to know several, start looking at you as if you're Goebbels.

I don't think that sort of censure would have bothered Great Aunt Violet. The other thing I remember about her was that she had a donkey. Are donkeys omnivorous like goats I wonder? If I got one could I surreptitiously start feeding it the travel section, guidebooks to northern Italy, in Italian?

Here's one small consolation. I don't suppose donkeys' digestive systems have changed much since 1946. I've got an encyclopaedia. I can look it up.

ROSE WILD

There's no bad language here, I swear

Adrian Mourby talks to parents who insist that swearing is left outside the front door with the children's muddy wellingtons

PAUL ROGERS

Phil and Cyndy Humphreys do not allow swearing among their children Lucy, left, Tristram and Marcus. "We do say fiddlesticks, darn and bother sometimes," Marcus says

Marcus Humphreys is 15 and when friends come to the house he issues a warning on the threshold. "We don't swear in here." He hasn't been told to say it but it's much the same rule that his father, Phil, kept to as a teenager, except that 30 years ago it wasn't necessary to voice the family bylaw. "We swore like troopers at school," Phil says. "But you never even thought of it at home."

These days Phil is an architect in the old Welsh country town of Montgomery and frequently finds himself on site with builders, a trade notorious for its abuse of language. His wife Cyndy has taught at a number of special schools with children whose vocabulary would put even builders to shame, but the family rule remains fixed. "We just don't," says Cyndy. "Well you do *sometimes*," says Marcus with sheepish candour.

"Oh I don't darling," Cyndy insists.

"You say *sugar*," Marcus grins. "Everyone knows what that means."

Once the mere existence of forbidden words was not even acknowledged in middle-class British families. Today, we are all aware of four-letter words and most adults use them occasionally.

I was horrified at some of the phrases our two-year-old daughter repeated to me one day, and thankful that she hadn't picked them up accurately. From time to time my wife and I tried to clean up our act, for we are the main source of our daughter's asperities, but Phil and Cyndy know that teenage children are influenced by the world beyond the family, and they are making a stand. With trainee adults in the house the Humphreys have decided that certain words will be left outside the front door, like muddy boots. There is no denying that they're still there, waiting to be used when Marcus and his friends go out again, or that sometimes they will creep inside.

"I swear in my room with Bruno," Marcus says. "But not in front of Mum and Dad. If you respect someone you don't swear at them." "But what about Tristram, darling?" Cyndy asks. She wants to know if her eldest ever blasphemes in front of his seven-year-old brother.

"No," says Marcus after due consideration. "He doesn't know what the words mean. It wouldn't be right. But Lucy and I swear when you're not around." Lucy is 13 and the Humphreys middle child. She agrees with her brother that bad language is something you often hear at school but that only the really unintelligent swear all the time.

"It fills up the spaces when they can't think of the right word," Marcus says. "I respect Dad and I've never heard him swear." Phil looks touched and somewhat bemused by this vote of confidence but Cyndy feels she is getting a bad press. "I don't swear, do I Marcus?"

"You do sometimes," he insists. "If you drop something, but you always say 'Pardon my French'." Phil intervenes to explain that everyone in the family recognises the need to have certain words for extreme situations. "I think society invents words we're not supposed to say. They're like a substitute for when things get really bad. It's almost as if you need the taboo so you can express yourself by breaking it," he says.

> 'Sticking to the rules is what really matters'

So what swear words are acceptable in a house with young teenagers? Cyndy is adamant that the F-word never crosses the threshold. "If I hear it in the playground it just leaves me feeling quite raw." "We do say fiddlesticks," says Marcus, who is clearly good at decoding his elders. "But that's more a joke," Cyndy insists. "Yeah, like darn and bother," Marcus laughs. The family is fairly relaxed about "bloody" when used under duress although both Phil and Cyndy can remember it being unacceptable in their childhood. "I can even remember not being allowed to say damn," Cyndy recalls. "But times are changing. I went into an art gallery recently — the place was really expensive — and they were selling a postcard with the word 'shit' crocheted on it. I couldn't believe it."

Cyndy admits there is something highly subjective about which words we choose to proscribe in our own homes but that sticking to the rules is what matters. "When I taught at a residential school for emotionally deprived children some of them, when they arrived, swore just about every other word. But we found they could give it up quite easily if they saw that you respected them for not swearing. Self-respect is very important to these kids and if they've been sworn at all their lives, they're just not going to feel any. We were very rigorous with them during the week and achieved real results but I'm sure when they went back home for the weekend they reverted to type, which is so sad."

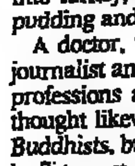
Home is where the language issue really comes home to roost. Phil and Cyndy feel they have a duty to protect their children; Marcus and Lucy feel a duty to protect Tristram; while Marcus seems to feel a duty to protect his parents.

Some friends of Cyndy were worried by the lax way in which they'd been bringing up their children, a fact that was thrown into sharp focus by — horror of horrors — the imminent arrival of Granny.

Accordingly, all the children were made to promise solemnly that they wouldn't swear for the duration of her visit. When the old lady arrived the youngest child took her to one side and whispered. "Granny, listen, whatever you do, while you're here you mustn't say *shit*, OK?"

Ruth Gledhill takes a welcome winter retreat from the orgy of overeating and Christmas repeats on television

Back to school with budding Buddhists



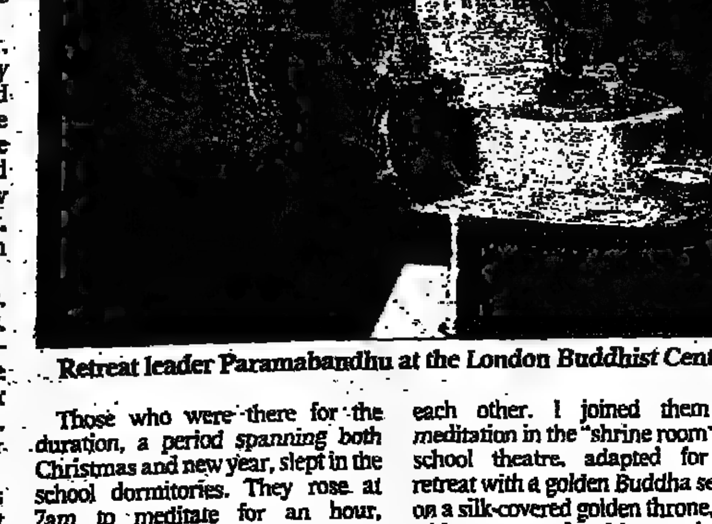
THERE was something satisfyingly self-righteous about being on an ascetic, vegetarian, meditative Buddhist retreat while family and friends were tucking into turkey, mince pies, Christmas pudding and an orgy of television.

A doctor, teacher, social worker, journalist and 70 others from many professions and social classes had thought likewise. Few, if any, were Buddhists, but had responded to the leaflets put out in libraries and surgeries in the run-up to the new year, offering the chance to relax, learn to meditate and "take a fresh look at yourself and your life".

A handful of the 17 organisers, from the Western Buddhist Order, had become fully-committed Buddhists and now live in one of the burgeoning numbers of single-sex Buddhist communities in London, attracted to the meditative life after going on an earlier retreat.

The order, founded in 1967, has adopted strands from different Buddhist disciplines, although its fundamental principles remain the same as those taught the world over. The theme of our retreat was to develop the five spiritual faculties of faith, energy, wisdom, concentration and mindfulness or awareness.

ADRIAN BROOKS



Retreat leader Paramabandhu at the London Buddhist Centre

Those who were there for the duration, a period spanning both Christmas and new year, slept in the school dormitories. They rose at 7am to meditate for an hour, concentrating either on breathing techniques, or "metta bhavana", trying to develop a positive frame of mind and emotion.

Breakfast was followed by two hours of work, where participants took turns to clean, cook and serve each other. I joined them for meditation in the "shrine room", the school theatre, adapted for the retreat with a golden Buddha seated on a silk-covered golden throne, and with an array of cushions and mats scattered around.

This was led by Srisambhava, an attractive, dark-haired young woman whose calm, reflective voice made staying awake a struggle in the darkened room. We tried the "Alexander lying down", a technique of lying on our backs, and intended to relieve the stress in our spines. I was not aware of any stress in my own spine until it all started to ease away. "Try to stay awake," Srisambhava instructed us from the front, as she urged us to concentrate on different parts of our bodies.

When she got to the head I gave up the struggle and fell into a blissful sleep, with vivid dreams of music and dancing. Half an hour later, the instruction to sit up drifted into the subconscious, and dozens of us guiltily rubbed our eyes as we moved into the "communications exercises" which followed.

Here, we had to choose a partner and look deeply into their eyes, repeating certain phrases and responses designed to affirm and reassure the other. The exercises were simple but surprisingly comforting, although accompanied by much giggling and embarrassment. After lunch, an optional yoga period led by a qualified instructor was laid on, although many chose to disappear on solitary walks through the surrounding countryside, or to swim in the pool.

The day was rounded off by a "puja", a devotional practice intended to strengthen an individual's emotional connection with their ideals and aspirations. Sadly, my stay was all too brief. I returned home, more relaxed by the repetitive Buddhist intonations than my family was by the repeats on television, and able to touch my toes properly for the first time in years.

● *London Buddhist Centre, 51 Roman Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 OHU (0181-981 1225)*

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Weekend retreat, page 17

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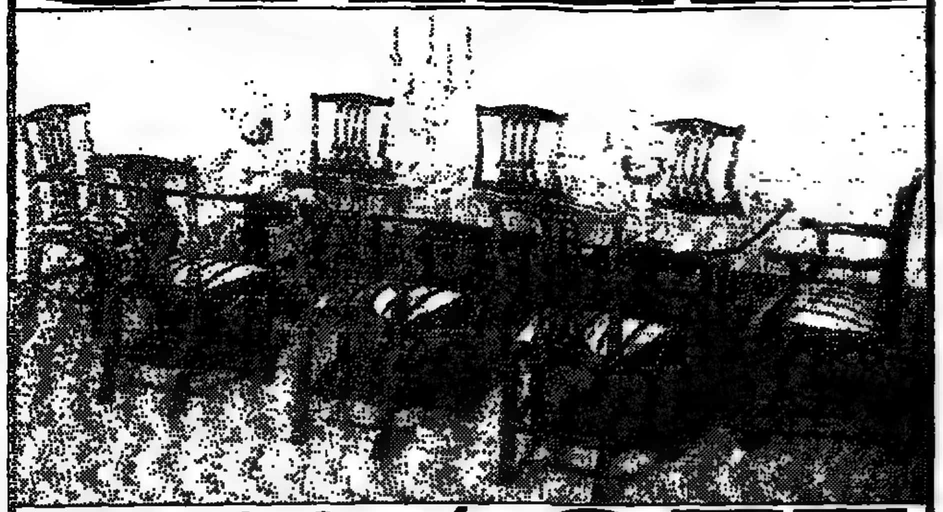

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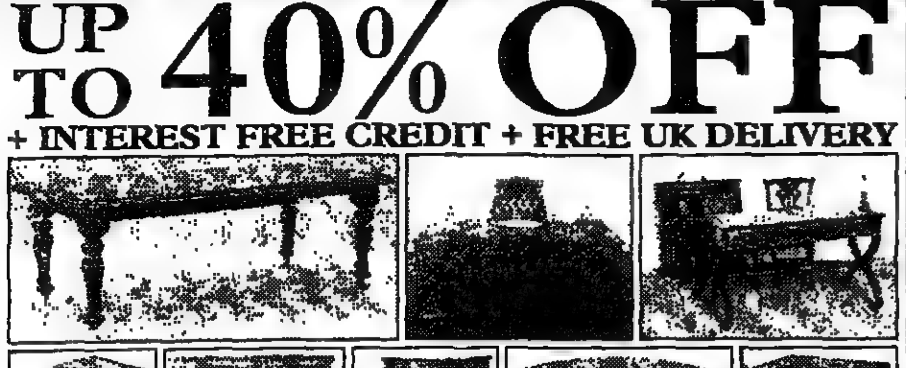

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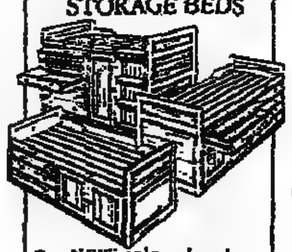

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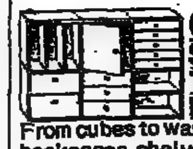

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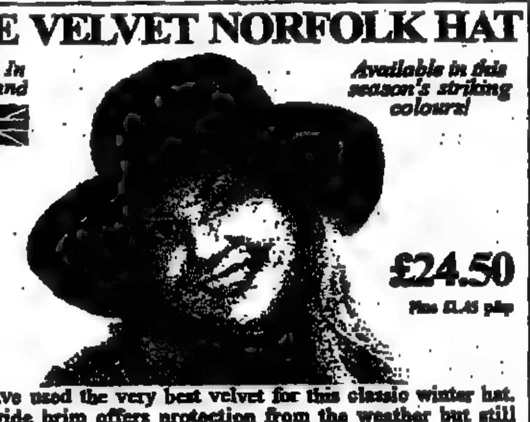

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If you want to apply over the 'phone and don't mind a few engaged tones, call them on Freephone (0800) 614686, even on a Sunday, you may find out right away whether you will be successful in obtaining any. Don't send any payment initially, you will be notified if you are one of the lucky ones whose application has succeeded. You can also spread the cost by by using one of your flexible plastic friends, i.e. MasterCard or Visa.

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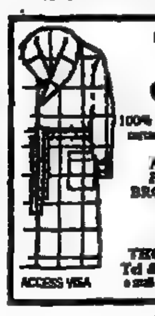
By Joanne Gower



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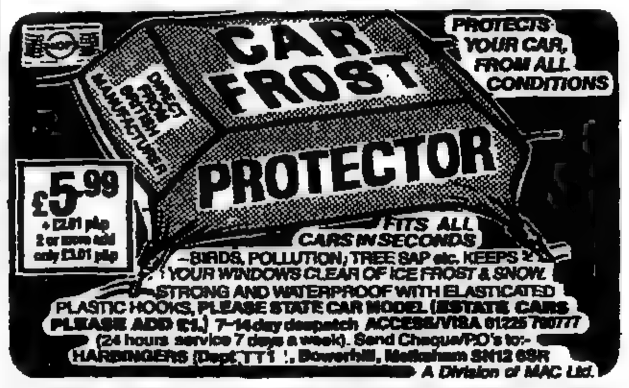

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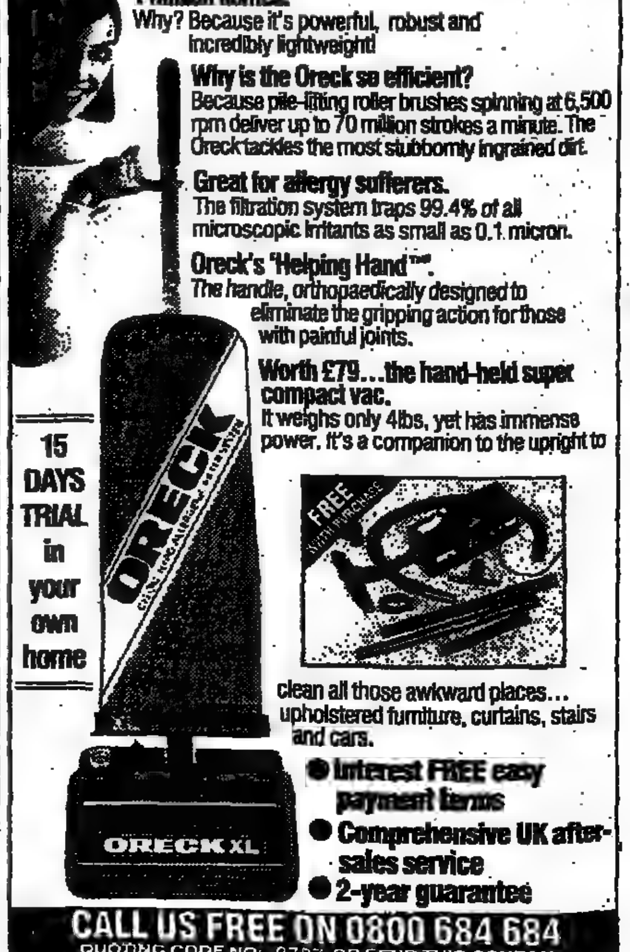

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Voyage through a drowned continent

Seychelles · 18

THE TIMES travel

Weekend retreat to renew the inner self

Britain · 17

Turkish temples of delight

Interested in classical treasures? Cruising in a small boat is one of the best ways to dip into the past

It is a solid charge against holidays that, like badly written books, they lack shape and purpose. As Kingsley Amis used to complain, you don't have to do anything on them to earn your first drink of the day. Why not have it at breakfast, or even earlier?

One way of avoiding this tendency to indolence is to go on a tour, with a programme and an objective. But then again, if the tour is too tightly organised it becomes more of a grind than being at work. Hopping on and off buses and into tourist-crammed "sights" is a gruelling business.

So it was in an ambiguous frame of mind that I embarked on a cruise along the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. I had been on a cruise before and not much enjoyed life afloat, even though that was on a liner with every imaginable luxury.

This was to be on something called a "gulet", a Turkish variety of two-masted yacht, a piffling 26 metres long. How was I going to be properly cossetted on a boat this size, let alone hide from my fellow passengers if I couldn't stand them? There was another problem. Our formal purpose was to visit ancient sites, mostly Greek and Roman. Now if I have a talent, it is for forgetting things, particularly languages. My O-level Latin and Greek have vanished, along with what little ancient history I ever knew.

I was even slightly surprised to discover — why am I admitting this? — that so much of Greek and Roman civilisation is actually in Turkey. Was I going to be bullied out of my ignorance by our tour leader and our promised on-board expert? The prospect was full of dismal possibilities.

Let me at once blow them all away. I enjoyed myself enormously. In fact I can't think of any break I have ever had which so thoroughly satisfied all the sensible criteria for a decent holiday: the weather should be warm and sunny, the company good, food and drink of high standard, service at least competent but above all amiable. My bed should be comfortable, I should read a good deal and see something of interest or beauty. And I must come home feeling that I have more than a rapidly fading tan to show for it, that I haven't entirely wasted my time on tacky do-it-yourself improvements to body and soul. By all these measures the trip was a wild success.

We flew from Heathrow via Istanbul to Dalaman, thence by short minibus trip to Gocek and our waiting boat, the *Arif Kaptan B*. The next morning we set sail on a zigzag course that took us west and then north, until a fortnight later we disembarked for the last time and flew home from Izmir. I sketch out the journey like this because a step-by-step account would be confusing at anything much short of book length. Instead, I shall concentrate on the highlights.

On a typical day we rose at eight in a quiet bay where the water was translucent and already warm: we plunged in to sluice away the vapours of the night and to earn our breakfast. When we had eaten that, but not before, Captain Hasan weighed anchor and set off on a two or three hour trip to another quiet bay. While at sea, we entertained ourselves: read, wrote, chatted, sunbathed or just goggled at the seascape and shoreline.

One day I surreptitiously checked on what was being read: Herodotus; biographies of Alexander the Great, Ataturk and Dr Johnson; two *Teach Yourself Turkish* books; one guidebook to Turkey and another guide to Mediterranean flora (this to check on flowers picked the day before).

Someone was reading Jeffrey Archer, but I shall not reveal the wretch's identity, nor admit what I was reading myself. To tell the truth I sometimes became so suffused with well-being at this stage of the day that I couldn't make up my mind what to do. It seemed a shame to do nothing but an equal shame to wreck the spell by doing something. Such are the agonising choices that face the absolutely contented holidaymaker.

At 12 or so, we dropped anchor, plunged over the side again, heard a brief lecture by our on-board guru about what we would see later and put down one or (never more than) two pre-lunch drinks. After lunch we had a siesta. Then, when the midday heat was easing off, we went ashore to visit the site of the day, usually an ancient city, getting there on foot or by minibus if the site was too far to walk. After an hour or two scrambling among ruins we returned to the boat: washed, changed, drank, dined and went to bed where we slept, dare I say, Homerically. There were many variations but this was the basic formula. No day was dull but no day was outrageously hectic either.

The passengers, a diverse bunch indeed, were as follows: an elderly but adventurous Australian couple (their next stop was Alaska, their next but three Siberia); their cousin, a stockbroker from New Zealander; two corporate executives based in Istanbul, one British, one Swiss, and their wives, one Australian, the other also Swiss; a British civil servant and his architectural historian wife; and me, a journalist. To these should be added the English wife of a Turkish professor of English, who was learning the ropes of tour leadership; Tom Johnson, who was leading our tour; and our guru, Dr Cyprian Broodbank of London's Institute of Archaeology, accompanied by his Greek archaeologist fiancée, Valasia.

On the face of it we were an unpromising combination. Cooped up for a long stretch together, I could easily imagine us coming to words, if not blows. But it didn't happen like that. The daily round gave us matter to chat about. Small though it was, the gulet proved a flexible space in which to do as we liked: rest in our tiny but well-equipped cabins, natter at the bar, read in the dining-room, or collapse into stupor in the bow or the stern. We respected each other's right to enjoy the trip in our own way. And we were jollied along by our team of cicerones.

While reading Classics at Cambridge, Mr Johnson became a tour guide on the Turkish coast. Since then he has spent much time learning the language and the ways of Turkey's boats and sailors. His experience showed in everything: in the choice of our guru (Dr Broodbank had been his tutor); of the sites and moorings we were to visit; how to fit them all into a workable itinerary; where to go for lunch or hire a minibus or a small boat. This kind of intimate knowledge meant that we were never rushed, never missed a connection, avoided the crowds, got into places other tourists do not see.

By my reckoning we visited 17 sites. This was a lot to cover in a fortnight but our programme was well balanced: every time I'd had enough we had an easy day, and when I got bored with those we suddenly had a busy one.

The sites we visited were as old as 2,500 BC and as recently in use as this century. They ranged from a single temple to the great city of Ephesus. To reach them we need sometimes only step ashore, at other times chug across a lake or clamber a hill or take a minibus or a perilous four-wheel ride up a mountain.

Whole civilisations and peoples drifted hazily across my consciousness as I gazed at their ruins: Carians, Lycians, Greeks, Persians, Romans, Arabs, Byzantines, Ottomans, even Britons, in the shape of Knights of St John or intrepid 19th-century discoverers.

Had I been on my own I think I might have become bored. There was plenty of natural beauty to look at — the ancients had a sure sense of place when they built. After the third or fourth or fifth stoa or acropolis or theatre, though, I might never have wanted to see another. But we were lucky. Dr Broodbank animated the scene wherever we went. What might just have been another pile of tumbled masonry to us was a trove of exciting clues to him. He trod among the ruins as nimbly as a goat and spotted connections that Sherlock Holmes, high on the classics, might have missed.

I had not, for example, realised how complicated a site can be. A Greek city might have started out Lycian, then been Hellenised and Romanised, later taken over by Byzantines and Ottomans; after which modern archaeologists may have dug here but not there, restored this building but not that.

The unskilled eye might have made out the Doric or the Corinthian orders and left it at that. But Dr Broodbank found mysterious palimpsests in the rubble and effortlessly talked us through them.

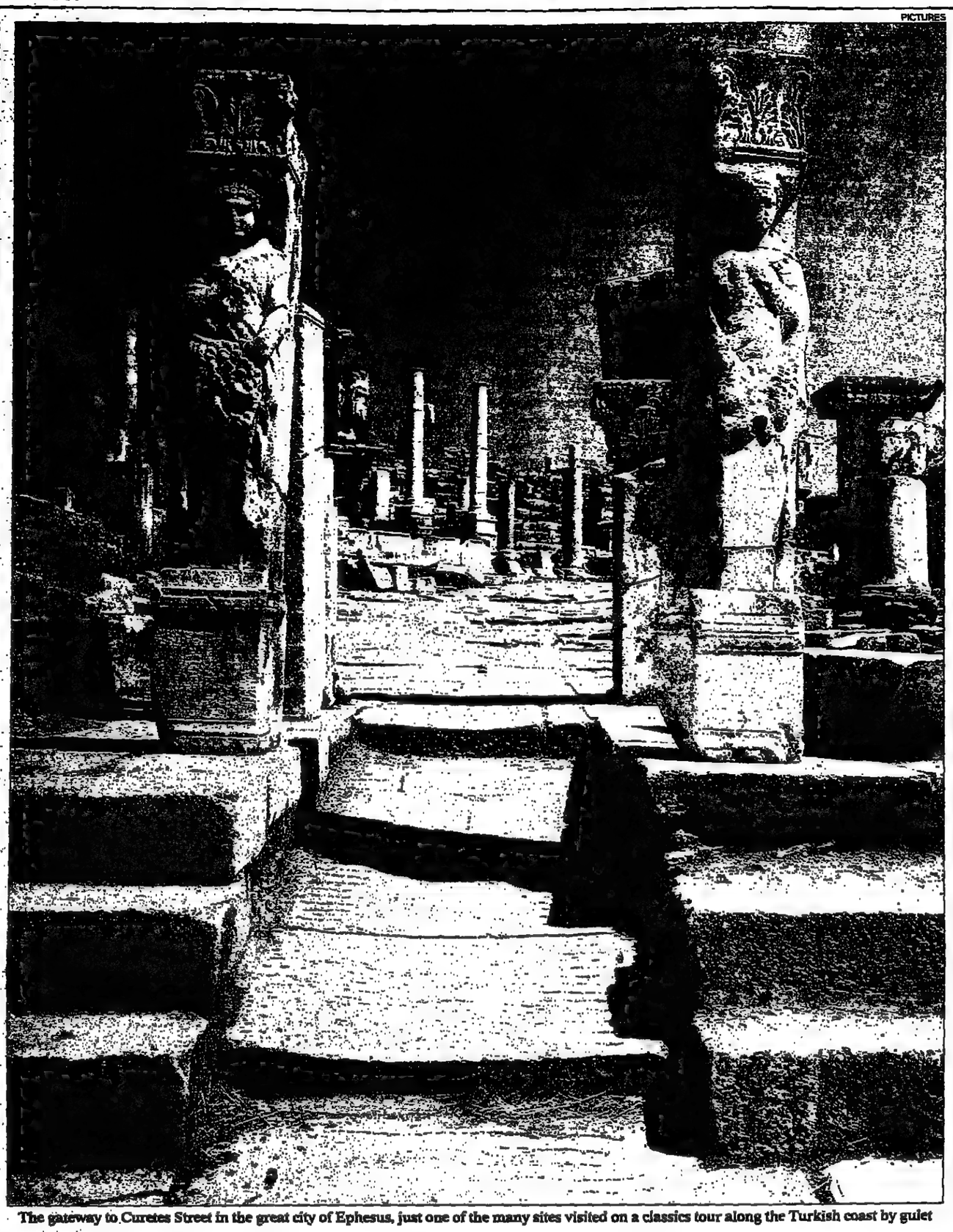
His detective work could be thrilling. We were walking over the remains of a not very exciting castle of perhaps the 13th or 14th century at Pecin Kale when the good doctor's eye fell on a tiny scrap of obsidian, a volcanic rock which made the sharpest blades available in the pre-metal age. There were no volcanoes nearby so the obsidian must have been brought there. He dated the period when this was common practice to 2,500 BC. What we saw was an unremarkable ruined castle; what we imagined, or tried to, was life 4,000 years earlier.

I learnt to tell the difference between a Greek theatre and a Roman one, but it was my imagination that was stirred.

Tourism, however, is currently covering the Turkish coast with ugly rashes of hotels, condos and timeshares and all the banalities that go with them: the discos, the tawdry gift shops, the cuisine favoured by the British abroad (it was not the least advantage of being on a gulet that we could avoid most of that). But the tourist age will pass. Its detritus will sink beneath the earth, leaving not much for the archaeologist to snuffle after. I came home feeling fit and well, with my mind a bit expanded and my spirits even more so. What more can you ask?

ERIC JACOBS

PICTURES



The gateway to Curetes Street in the great city of Ephesus, just one of the many sites visited on a classics tour along the Turkish coast by gulet

FACT FILE

■ Westminster Classic Tours offers classical or tailor-made private charters, so contact the company on 0171-404 3738 to discuss your priorities. Tours are for any length up to 14 days and can be divided between Istanbul and the Mediterranean coast.

■ The company also offers painting excursions led by the artist Susannah Fiennes.

■ This year's rates for the Ionian and Carian tour are £1,645 per person. This covers almost everything from the moment of arrival at Heathrow. Even drinks, except spirits, are included. Extras are your visa (£10, payable on arrival in Turkey), your bar bill and a well-earned tip to the crew at the end of the journey (£30 to £40 per passenger is recommended). The supplement for singles is £395. Tour dates are: June 1-15; September 7-21; October 4-18.

■ Customers wishing to get to grips with their classics before embarking on a Westminster tour might like to contact Friends of Classics, which has close links with Westminster Classic Tours. The Friends' secretary, Jeannie Cohen, is at 51 Achilles Road, London NW6 1DZ (0171-431 5088).

■ Several companies offer short trips around the Turkish coast by gulet.

■ Reading: Sarah Anderson of The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Memed My Hawk* by Yashar Kemal (Harvill, £8.99, ISBN 1 860 46103 4). *A Fez of the Heart* by Jeremy Seal (Picador, £6.99, ISBN 0 330 34362 9). *Turkey, Travel Survival Kit* (Lonely Planet, £12.99, ISBN 0 864 42364 0).

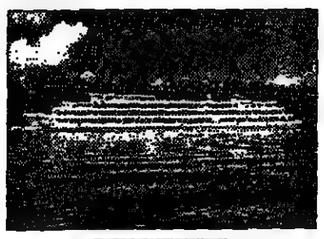
Ephesus: treasure trove

ST PETERSBURG TO MOSCOW BY RIVER

Mother Russia has been blessed with numerous vast rivers, lakes and inland seas which from the earliest of times were the first and natural highways. The adding of canals to these natural assets allow us to travel great distances from the remote forests of Karelya to Moscow and beyond aboard comfortable river vessels which make for a perfect moving hotel.

This 14 night river voyage links the great cities of the Tsars. Russia's two most famous cities are also the greatest repositories of Russian art and architecture. Moscow, the medieval and 20th century capital has a wonderful heritage of early buildings, while St Petersburg, the creation of Peter the Great, benefited from the inspiration of Europe's greatest 18th century architects and craftsmen.

Three rewarding days will be spent in each of these great cities. In between we will cruise the intricate pattern of connecting rivers, canals and lakes that link St Petersburg with Moscow. Having explored the wonders of the city, we will sail through the enchanting countryside with its tranquil and timeless quality which has so inspired writers and musicians over the centuries.



THE MS KRASIN

This sleek, modern river-cruise vessel was built in Germany in 1989 and is under a long term charter to a Californian based company. Unlike many river vessels in Russia the 'Krasin' is only available in the UK and USA. English is the only language used on board, thereby avoiding seemingly endless announcements in other languages. The vessel was completely refurbished in 1995 with quality imported furnishings and the public rooms which include three lounges, bars and a splendid concert hall are the finest afloat in Russia today.

There is accommodation for up to 250 passengers and all cabins have outside views, shower and toilet. Upgraded meals are prepared under the supervision of a Western chef and complimentary wine is served with dinner. The ship is provisioned with Western-style amenities imported from the USA.

THE ITINERARY

DAY 1 London-St Petersburg by scheduled flights. Drive to the MS Krasin and embark.

DAY 2 St Petersburg Morning city excursion including the Peter and Paul Fortress. Afternoon excursion to the great Rococo Palace of Pushkin, built for the Empress Elizabeth.

DAY 3 St Petersburg Morning visit to the Hermitage Museum. Afternoon free. Evening ballet performance at the Hermitage Theatre in the Winter Palace.

DAY 4 St Petersburg Day free until late afternoon sailing.

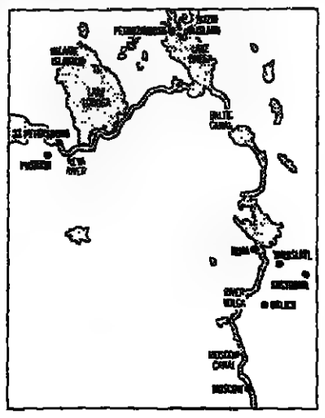
DAY 5 Lake Ladoga A relaxing day cruising across this vast lake.

DAY 6 Kizhi-Petrozavodsk Today we will sail across Lake Onega, making a stop at the beautiful island of Kizhi. Visit the impo-ing 22 domed Church of the Transfiguration, a marvel of 18th century Russian wooden architecture. In the evening we will make a call at Petrozavodsk, the capital of Karelya.

DAY 7 White Lake Cruising the White Lake and the Volga.

DAY 8 Irma We will moor in this pretty riverside settlement. Explore the countryside on foot and enjoy a Russian barbecue by the river.

DAY 9 Yaroslavl Visit this well preserved 'Golden Ring' city and see the magnificent Church of Elijah.



DAY 10 Kostroma One of the hardiest cities of the 'Golden Ring' and home to the noble families of Godunov and Romanov.

DAY 11 Uglich A delightful 'Golden Ring' city, its skyline is dominated by the blue and gold cupolas of the cathedral.

DAY 12 Moscow Morning on the Moscow Canal. Arrive Moscow at lunch time. Afternoon city drive. Evening visit to the Moscow Circus.

DAY 13 Moscow Morning visit to the Kremlin including the fine collection of imperial regalia in the Armoury Museum. Afternoon free.

DAY 14 Moscow Morning excursion to Sergiev Posad. Afternoon free. Evening concert.

DAY 15 Moscow Disembark in the morning. Time for shopping and individual sight-seeing. After lunch continue to airport for late afternoon departure to London.

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Italy: A three-page special – from the hilltop towns of Umbria, the homeland of St Francis of Assisi, to …

By slow train to medieval magic

Others may deride their slowness and criticise their punctuality, but I have a secret passion for Italian trains, for the carriage with a view. I love to sit back, San Pellegrino bottle in one hand, guidebook in the other, with an historic city and its sights in prospect. For parents like me, rail travel has another attraction. Treated to a train trip in the morning, a child will be more patient among the antiquities in the afternoon.

Like its glossier neighbour Tuscany, Umbria is rich in antiquities of every sort: the shrine of St Francis at Assisi, shimmering medieval hill towns, smudgy green valleys and fine food.

Umbria's array of Renaissance offerings include Perugia, the region's capital, with its medieval cathedral, dozens of other churches, a gallery, impressive main piazza, cafés, ice-cream parlours and shoe shops.

You can read all about these splendours as you proceed up the line on the narrow gauge Ferrovia Centrale Umbra railway, which runs from Terni 145km (about 90 miles) northward up the Tiber valley, through the capital towards Sansepolcro, a town just over the Tuscan border.

In Britain, such an idiosyncratic railway, with its manual signals, worked by highly polished brass levers on the platforms, would attract enthusiasts. But the average FCU passenger is a schoolchild, or a bemused tourist, wondering at the contrast between the Ruritanian grandeur of the railway's staff uniforms, bristling with gold braid, and the dowdy rolling stock.

Delaying the delights of Perugia, we travelled on to Città di Castello, in the north of Umbria. We were following the recommendation of a guard who had assured us that, although all the line was pretty, the stretch between the capital and Sansepolcro was the most attractive. His loyalty was perhaps superior to his aesthetic sense.

Climbing steeply out of Perugia and its pasta-making industrial belt, the line runs between tiny, ruined halts, green smallholdings and the occasional ruined chapel. In the farmhouse gardens, the apple trees are hung with empty mineral water bottles to scare away the marauding birds.

We lunched in Città di Castello, a standard issue Umbrian town, with the requisite art gallery and sombre cathedral, then bought a ticket back to Perugia's Santa Anna station. There and back, we heard few English voices, underlining one of the main differences between Umbria and Tuscany.

Walking up the hill from the Santa Anna, through the gates of the city, we made for the cathedral, the best place to start in a town over-endowed with monuments. It was filled with more schoolchildren, some praying at the altar of the Madonna delle Grazie, perhaps for deliverance from acne.

FACT FILE

■ Simply Tuscany & Umbria, Chiswick Gate, 598-608 Chiswick High Road, London W4 5RT (0181-995 8277; 24-hour brochure line 0181-995 9323) offers self-catering holidays in a two-bedroom apartment at the Casale Satriano from £338 per person for seven days, rising to £515 for 14 days, including return flights Gatwick to Pisa or Heathrow to Rome, and hire car.

■ Umbrian tourist information centre, Corso Vanucci 30, Peruga (00 39 75 572 5341).

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Rat King* by Michael Dibdin (Faber, £5.99, ISBN 0 57115 421 2), *A Valley in Italy* by Lisa St Aubin de Teran (Penguin, £6.99, (ISBN 0 14016 886 9), *Tuscany and Umbria: the Rough Guide* (Rough Guides, £8.99, ISBN 1 85828 091 5).

Perugia's cathedral is less exceptional than the sights outside. At the edge of its steps, in the medieval Piazza IV Novembre, stands the 13th-century Fontana Maggiore. Its lower and upper basins are decorated with bas-reliefs and statues, each aspect telling a saintly or allegorical story.

To the right of the fountain stands the late 13th-century Palazzo dei Priori, probably the world's most attractive council office, its peachy-beige curving walls topped with delicate crenallations. One glimpse of this fairy tale local government building makes you dream of some humble pen-pushing post, with daily scope for observing the palazzo's imposing interior, including the fresco-lined council chamber. In reality, you can climb to the fourth floor and visit the Galleria Nazionale dell' Umbria, which has several masterpieces. There are works by Perugino, one of Raphael's teachers and the greatest Umbrian artist, at his peak between 1480 and 1502.

Perugino's contemporary, Piero della Francesco, Tuscan by birth but Umbrian by style, is also much in evidence. Della Francesco's polytypch of the Annunciation deservedly has its own room, with an audio-visual display.

Sipping an espresso in the Corso Vannucci, Perugia's main street, lined by bars and designer shops, we noticed that Perugians, dressed in beige and green, take care to coordinate even their umbrellas to their ochre and stone surroundings. Those who prefer brown are, perhaps, making a nod towards one of Perugia's other big products besides Renaissance architecture: Perugino chocolate.

Some of that chocolate sustained our family on the journey back to Todi, which also has an august cathedral and spacious piazza. Its most arresting sight, however, is the Santa Maria della Consolazione on the outskirts. Started in 1508, this lovely honey-hued church is a mini St Peter's, domed and built in the shape of a Greek cross.

Spoleto is not served by the FCU but you can take a train from Rome or Perugia. We arrived by car, conserving our energies for this town built on the perpendicular. After the climb to the Piazza del Duomo, you may feel as if you have just followed a particularly strenuous exercise video, *Callisthenics the Medieval Way*. But a 12th-century treat awaits you at the top. The cathedral and the wide, sloping square are lovely both in their proportions and dove-grey colouring. This muted background sets off the cathedral's proudest possession, the Fra Lippo Lippi fresco in the presbytery, a brightly coloured mini-series of the life of the Virgin.

Spoleto's other delights include its cuisine, which we sampled in the Trattoria Panciolle — and concluded that, although Umbrian cooking may be based on grilled meat, particularly lamb, its pleasures do not pall.

The supposed beauty spot of the Spoleto district is the Fountain of Clitunno, praised by Bryon in *Childe Harold* and painted by Corot. Today they would be disappointed. The sweet waters of the little lake are, in places, stagnant, and Byron's nymphs replaced by Flemish schoolgirls having a sly cigarette among the rocks.

We made all our journeys from our base, the Casale Satriano, a converted farm building outside Montefalco, another hill town gem on the eastern side of Umbria. Nearby, fields surround the former second home of the bishops of Spoleto. Like the Tuscans, the Umbrians have embraced *agriturismo*, turning barns and outhouses into chic apartments with swimming pools. The bishop's house no longer accommodates churchmen — it was sold off at the beginning of this century, despite a papal edict excommunicating the buyers of church properties.

Undeterred by this thunderbolt, the Antonelli family, great-grandchildren of the original purchaser, are still happily installed in the house, running a winery. They also press olives for politically correct, preservative-free olive oil.

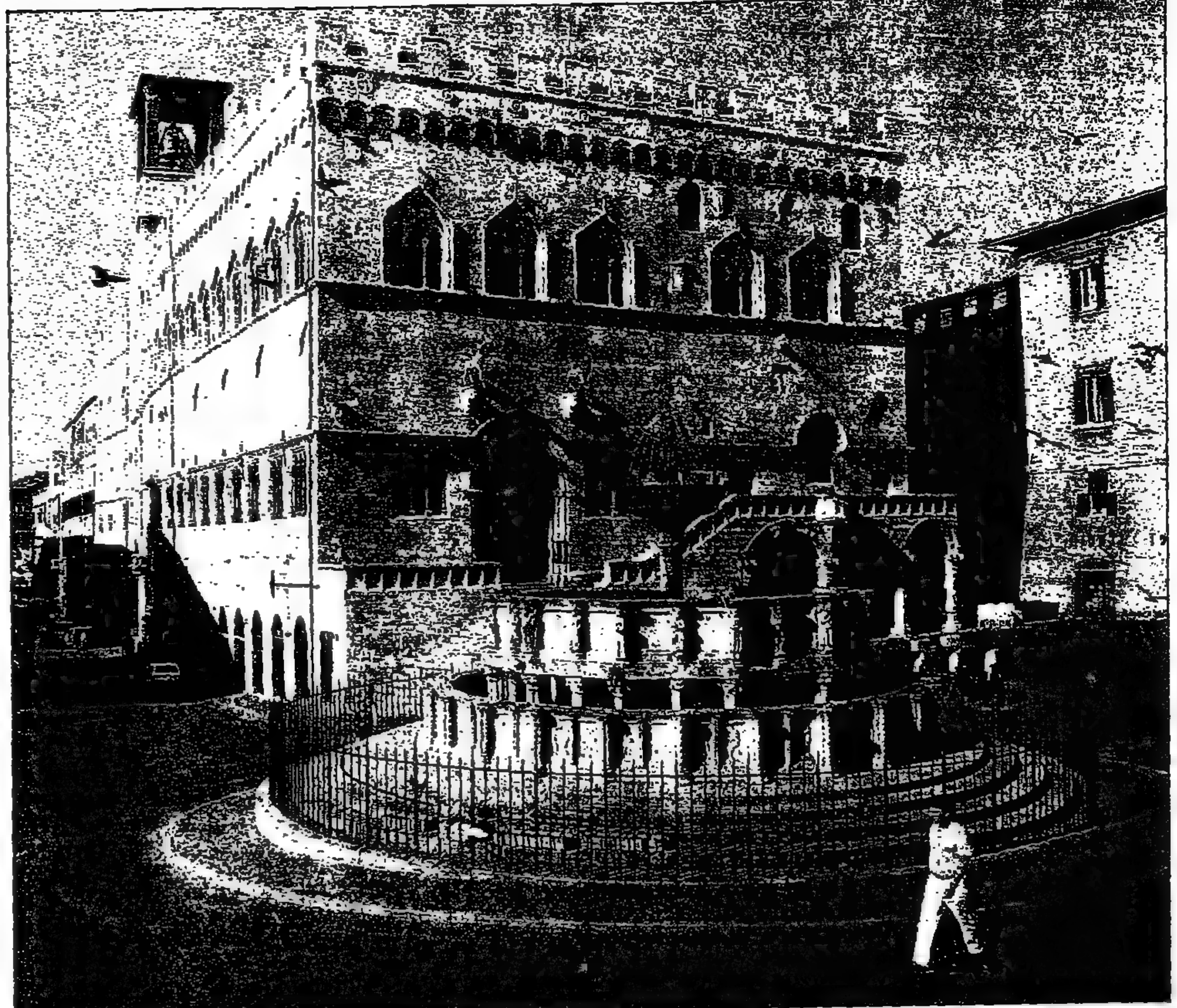
Montefalco is known as the balcony of Umbria, because from it you can behold the beauties of the whole area. Gazing at the green hills below is as much effort as you can muster here. At no time of the day does town seems anything but sleepy: a perpetual lunch hour prevails. Those who can rouse themselves can tour the San Francesco church, with its frescoes by the Benozzo Gozzoli, a prolific Florentine painter.

This brief, but beautiful tour should have spurred us to set out to see the infinite glories of Assisi, with its frescoes of local boy made beatific, St Francis. But the contemplation of connecting train timetables proved too much.

ANNE ASHWORTH

● *The author was a guest of Simply Tuscany & Umbria*

PICTURES



In the main square of Perugia, the region's capital, is the 13th-century Fontana Maggiore, decorated with bas-reliefs and statues

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TRAVEL CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

هكذا من الأصل

. . . the fine art treasure trail of its more sophisticated neighbour Tuscany, and the secret delights of Lake Orta

Just one more fresco

Travelling by car to our holiday villa in Italy, we finally arrived at the Mont Blanc tunnel (a bad choice in high season, as we soon discovered). The A1, the Autostrada del Sole, then took us down into the Lombardy plain and up over the Appennines to Florence; an hour later we were nosing down a woodland track to discover a villa set in the hillside, with woods behind and an olive grove in front, halfway between Arezzo and Siena.

There are few things more pleasant than sitting on a shaded patio in the morning, drinking one's first cup of coffee, watching the cypresses emerging from the mist in the valley, while the sun is twinkling off the roofs, spires and domes of the little fortified towns — Lucignano and Monte San Savino — that crown the hills beyond.

I was planning the day's excursion: an oenological expedition, perhaps? To the south is Montepulciano with its *vino nobile*: another handsome fortified town, with a long main street winding steeply up from the narrow gate to the splendid Piazza Grande on the summit; or Montalcino, home of Italy's first designer wine, the prestigious brunello — picturesque even by the standards of this region. On the way there, we could lunch at Bagno Vignoni and admire the thermal baths in which once splashed (though possibly not simultaneously) St Catherine of Siena and Lorenzo the Magnificent. To the west is the Chianti region, with a host of growers eager to demonstrate their wines, grappas and olive oil; and to the north, on the lower slopes of Montalbano, the Carmignano wine district, where you can lunch in the home of Leonardo da Vinci's maternal grandmother.

A more cultural jaunt would begin in Siena with its scallop-shell central square, the Campo, possibly the most beautiful public space in Europe, where one sips a drink and looks across at the 13th-century Palazzo Pubblico. The Palio, the bare-backed horse race round the square, had taken place a few days before, but partisans of the winning *contrada*, or city ward, were still excitedly parading round the square in fancy dress, boisterously waving banners bearing the ward's device of a green caterpillar, and singing over and over again the first lines of *Jingle Bells* — a strange choice, given the season and the place. Above the square is the cathedral, with its striped black-and-white marble façade like some gigantic humbug. Inside, I tried out my rusty Latin on the story of Pope Pius II's life which accompanies Pinturicchio's frescoes in the Piccolomini library, and discovered, with some surprise, that he paid a secret visit to Scotland and England in 1435.

Besides wine and food, art was the magnet that drew us to Italy; but visitors must beware the newly discovered Stendhal syndrome, which results from incautiously overdosing on masterpieces and apparently hospitalises one or two northern European tourists in Florence each year.

Mindful of this danger, I urged moderation and confined myself to one or two carefully chosen pictures at a time, with long periods for recuperation at a café table in between; my companion, more intrepid, would take on entire galleries one after another with no noticeable ill-effects. I particularly liked the 14th-century portrait of Guidoriccio da Fogliano in Siena's Museo Civico. Wearing a bizarrely patterned outfit which matches that of his horse, a *condottiere* rides slowly across a barren landscape between two medieval towns. Formerly ascribed to Simone Martini, it is now thought by some to be a 16th-century fake: the American art historian who first suggested this was banned from the museum by the city council.

Our villa's position was ideal for a trip along what John Mortimer has called the Piero della Francesca trail. We began in the church of San Francesco in Arezzo. Here are Piero's frescoes depicting the *Legend of the True Cross*: still being restored, they are not too easy to see, and you need a handful of 100 lira pieces to keep the spotlights on.

Then, over the hills to the east to tiny Monterchi. In the hall opposite the cemetery chapel the same artist's *Madonna del Parto* is on exhibition, together with pretty computer graphics depicting its restoration. On, then, a few miles to Sansepolcro, Piero's birthplace, and two more pictures: the *Madonna della Misericordia* and *The Resurrection* which, according to Kenneth Clark, is the greatest picture in the world.

Immediately after Sansepolcro we crossed into the Marche: stunning views opened on either side as we climbed up the most winding road in Italy that took us over the Alps of the Moon and on towards Urbino: a golden miniature city perched on a hill, with a staggeringly beautiful ducal palace.

We went to the gallery on the first floor of the palace to pick off the last two targets: Piero's *Madonna of Senigallia* and his more mysterious and uncanny *Flagellation*.

Next day we packed and headed home . . . mindful of the unseen beauties we were leaving behind.

TIM BINYON

● *The author was a guest of The Individual Traveller's Company*

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The reward for followers of Piero della Francesca is to see *The Resurrection* at the Museo Civico, Sansepolcro

TUSCANY FACT FILE

■ The Individual Traveller's Company, Bignor, near Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1QD (Italian brochure request line: 01798 869421; reservations: 01798 869426) offers a wide range of villas throughout Italy. The company will make travel arrangements and tailormake the facilities as far as possible to suit individual requirements. The author stayed in the property number IT90. Prices for a party of up to four people for a two-week stay, including either one week's car hire (from Florence or Pisa), or a short sea crossing, or Le Shuttle, are from £1,148 to £1,548, depending on season.

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Innocence* by Penelope Fitzgerald (Flamingo, £5.99, ISBN 0 006 54237 9). *The Rise and Fall of the House of Medici* by Christopher Hibbert (Penguin, £8.99, ISBN 0 140 05090 6). *Within Tuscany* by Matthew Spender (Penguin, £7.99, ISBN 0 140 14920 1). *Tuscany and Umbria. The Rough Guide* (Rough Guides, £8.99, ISBN 1 858 28091 5).

Where Balzac was swept off his feet

Lake Orta is the jewel of Italy's II lakes, the smallest and the most northerly, set against a shimmering backdrop of hills and Alpine peaks. It is also Italy's best-kept secret, with only a smattering of villages and hotels dotted around the waterfront.

Most Italians are hard pushed to tell you where it is, although it covers about seven square miles, and were it not for the occasional motorboat transporting the few tourists around the lake, it would be difficult to tell what century you were in.

The abundant scenery is immediately charming but the lake's mystery and attraction comes from the Isola di San Giulio, the tiny island cast adrift in the centre of the water, looking like a ship poised to set sail to shore.

It is named after its founder, St Julius, who walked across the lake in the 4th century and slew a few dragons before setting up home there. Or so legend has it. His body can be seen in the sepulchre of the splendid but rather sombre church which dominates the island.

The small villages on the shore all seem to lean towards this centrepiece. The effect is so pretty that you can forgive the changeable mountain climate which can mean a few overcast and rainy days in high season. Unlike many holiday places which adopt a rather sulky air in the rain, the mountain scenery actually lends itself to a downpour.

The temptation to be languid is overwhelming, but there is plenty to do. Water sports are abundant and there are many walks, from the gentle to the difficult. From our base at the welcoming Hotel Giardinetto, set on the lake in Pettenasco about one mile from Orta, we explored the nearby villages and walked in the hills behind them. The town of Orta is a vision of narrow, medieval streets. It's said that Balzac was so taken with it that he proposed to his girlfriend here: the central square facing the island has a wonderfully romantic feel, wasted on me and my female companion.

Above the town, up a series of winding paths, lies a mystical hilltop plateau scattered with 20 chapels built to commemorate the life of St Francis. On a drizzling day these deserted shrines, filled with friezes and statues acting out scenes from the saint's life, seemed quite sinister, but are powerful in their effect.

For metropolitan explorers, Turin is two hours away on a direct train, with Milan only 50 miles distant. And if you want to try a different lake, Orta's big sister Maggiore is only minutes away by car. At the resort of Stresa, on Maggiore, about half an hour's drive from Orta, palm trees line the promenade and there is a grander, more cosmopolitan feel.

Lake Orta: one of Italy's best-kept secret resorts

Tourism has a more obvious grip here, with the requisite shops selling leather goods and postcards, but whether you indulge or ignore, it is still possible to lose yourself in history.

On the lake, the three Borromean islands are an easy and cheap day trip. They nestle close together but all boast different characters. Isola dei Pescatori (fishermen's island) is a tiny, working fishing village with nets draped over the railings of the stone houses and boats lined up against one shore. Nearby, the Isola Bella is entirely taken up by its grand 17th-century palace and gardens, while the Isola Madre is a floating botanical garden of rare plants and exotic flowers.

A cable car to the summit of Mottarone, which towers behind the town, affords spectacular views. On a clear day you can apparently see the tower of the *Duomo in Milan*; sadly, we had to peer through clouds.

At lake level, a few happy hours were spent at the enticingly quirky museum of umbrellas and parasols just outside Stresa, which plays host to umbrellas from all ages, as well as the tools used to make and repair them.

Many tourists come to Stresa and then spend most of their time leaving it again, scaling mountains, visiting other lakes, even embarking on day trips to Switzerland. But this does it a disservice.

Stresa has a more hearty daytime feel than a resort which twinkles into the small hours. But with a gin and tonic, a veranda and a harmonious view, why go anywhere else at all. . .

KATHRYN KNIGHT

● *The author was a guest of Inghams Lakes and Mountains (0181-780 4444), which offers one week's half-board at the Hotel Giardinetto, with flights from Gatwick, Manchester, Heathrow and Birmingham to Milan from £401. A week's half-board at the four-star Hotel Astoria in Stresa starts from £458.*

● *Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: Cadogan Guide Lombardy, Milan and the Italian Lakes (£12.99, ISBN 0 947 754 63).*

Bergamo, page 16

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Italy: The little-known city of Bergamo contains a satisfying mix of Renaissance history and delightful people

Dedicated to sticky buns

You have to doubt a city's self-confidence when it describes itself in relation to somewhere else: Venetians do not claim to inhabit the Bruges of the Adriatic, nor do Athenians boast of their city as the *Edinburgh of the eastern* Mediterranean. Bergamo, known as the Siena of the North, need not be so diffident however: it is a real find, a delight in its own right.

There is a Tuscan feel, with the old city perched on a crag, surrounded by 16th-century walls, *narrow, traffic-free* streets paved with chevron cobbles, and the white stumps of San Gimignano-style towers. There is no breathtaking Piazza del Campo but there is a proud central square, *a satisfying mix* of medieval and Renaissance buildings with architectural references to the city's period under the sway of Venice.

Nearby is a jewel that Venice, or Siena for that matter, would give its eyeteeth for. The chapel housing *the remains of the great* Venetian mercenary Colleoni, who was born in Bergamo, lies just off the Piazza Vecchia. The sarcophagus is a miracle of bas-relief: it is supported on four marble pillars, with a sort of kennel at the base of each, all four housing a sculpted hound — or maybe a miniature lion, because the Venetians, for all their devotion to

St Mark, sometimes had a rather approximate view of big cat anatomy. Dogs or lions, one of them is overcome by the death of its master and howls, its head upturned, in stony misery. The other three look towards their brother *with expressions of pity and* concern. Nearby is the more modest tomb of Colleoni's favourite daughter, Medea. The Chapel (in contrast to the heavy *Duomo next door*) is breathtaking in its artistry and pathos. It was early spring and I had it all to myself.

Bergamo was the birthplace of Donizetti and the much-loved Pope John XXIII, and the city deserves a medal for gastronomic heroism for its local speciality — polenta taragna, a way of dealing with that runt of the starch family which makes it palatable.

Bergamo is also a city dedicated to sticky buns, with *an Austrian-like supply of pasticcerie* and cafés. Fish is surprisingly plentiful (there is a large inland fish market), and the Taverna dei Colleoni in the main square features it in a good fixed-price menu for *50,000 lire (£20). I preferred* the Antica Hosteria del Vino Buono, the best of the upper town's simple restaurants, and found its 25,000 lire lunch menu excellent value: local ravioli, lamb and one of its four fruit tarts (although if you are indecisive and winsome enough *they will bring you a* bit of each) and a half-carafe of the eponymous good wine.

My primary reason for going to Bergamo sprang from a Venetian experience: seeing a sublime Madonna and Child in the Museo Correr by Lorenzo Lotto, the principal *exponent of the Bergamo* school. Lotto's portraits are deeply and delicately psychological, and Bergamo has at least four breathtaking altarpieces, mainly in the lower town in a series of churches along the Via Pignolo.

The Accademia Carrara also contains some sublime Lottos — as well as Bellinis, Raphaels, and works by Caravaggio and Piero della Francesca — which make it one of the finest galleries outside Florence, Venice or Rome, and the emptiest.

Bergamo is two cities, the historic upper town linked to lower Bergamo by the funicular railway, served by regular and efficient buses. Its dazzling churches apart, the lower town is a pleasant but unremarkable example of the post-Risorgimento era, sturdily civic, with its inevitable Via *Garibaldi, Verdi and Mazzini.* Apart from some spectacular temples to gluttony among the food shops in the central shopping area, the principal delights are in the *alta città.* The upper town is not particularly well served with hotels: the Agnello d'Oro, with 20 rooms, has character and is well situated, close to the *Piazza Vecchia, with rooms* which are simple, if a touch charmless and noisy. But at 100,000 lire for a double, it is a third of the price of the five-star Excelsior San Marco, a modern hotel in the lower town, close to the funicular.

Trains run fairly regularly between Bergamo and Milan, an hour or so away. It was a *mistake to hire a car, since it is* virtually impossible to park inside the old city. Mercifully, I could not get it to start on the *second day and it reverted to* the responsibility of Thrifty Car Rental.

Another of the advantages of not being Siena is that Bergamo, being comparatively under-visited, is quite remarkably hospitable and friendly. At midnight when I arrived, desperately delayed by a strike of airport firemen *and unaware of Old Berga*mo's antipathy to motor vehicles, I found myself hopelessly lost. At a traffic light, a young *man recognised my plight and* told me to follow him — a detour of 20 minutes which he seemed happy to undertake, telling me he would soon be visiting Oxford and was sure the local inhabitants would be just as pleased to help a similarly struggling visitor.

*Again, leaving the Accad*emia Carrara, I was escorted *the mile or so by foot to a* church to which I had asked directions. At San Bartolomeo, as I was reading my guidebook, I felt *a touch on my* shoulder: the priest asked if I would like to know more about the prized altarpiece. The ensuing lecture on the political, moral, allegorical and artistic aspects of the painting was delivered with humour, perception and tolerance whenever my grasp on his Italian faltered.

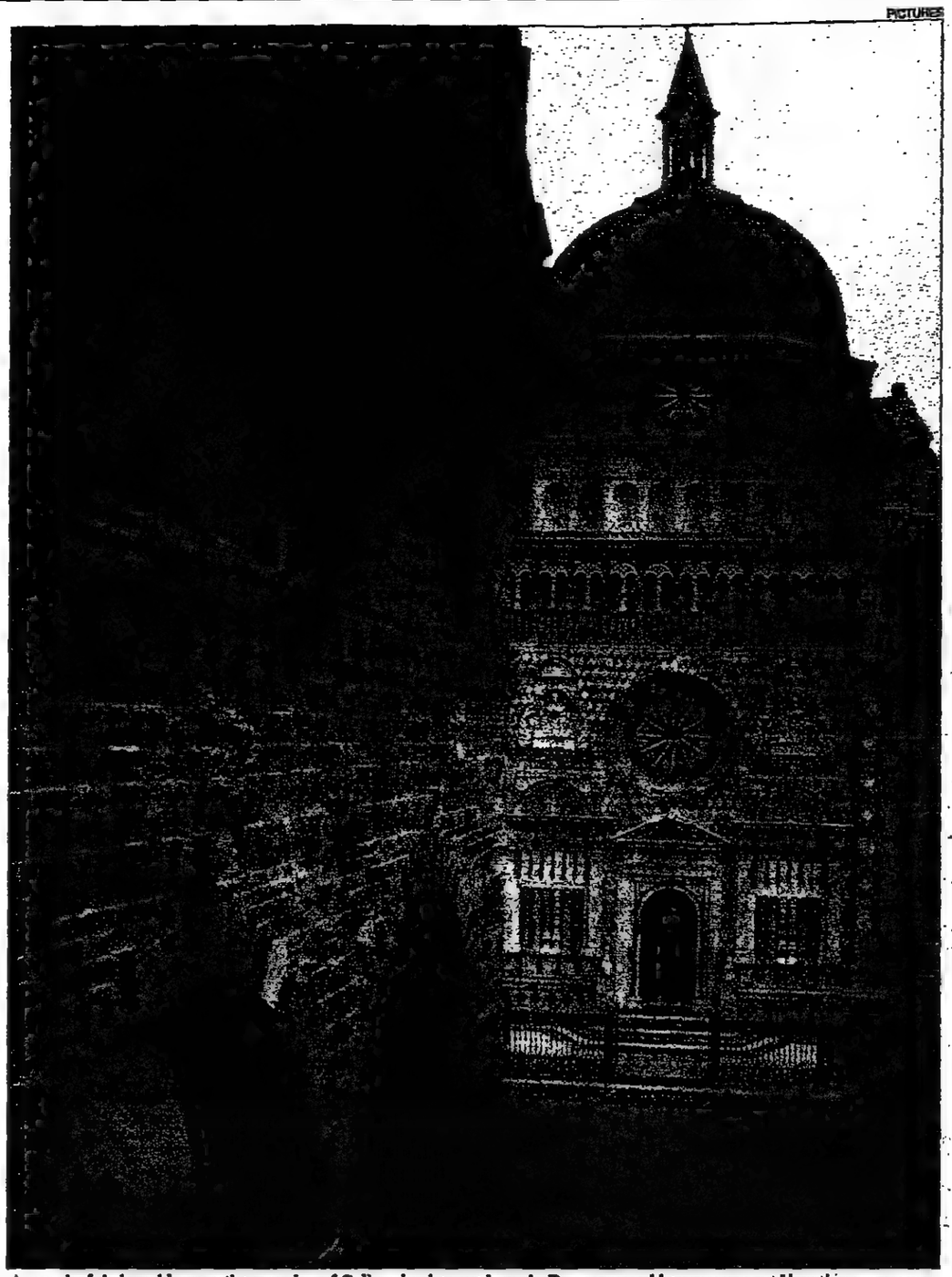
At San Bernardino, 100 years further down the road with a ravishing pellucid Virgin and Child enthroned with *the requisite crew of cherubim* and saints, an evening epiphany service was beginning and I was pressed to join in. Despite explaining my Protestant, if not occasionally pagan, principles I was cheerfully recruited to the ceremony, which involved processing round the tiny church with lighted candles.

At the Hosteria del Vino Buono, they gave me dinner at the lunch-time discount *because they were pleased I* had come back. It is a commentary on the damage that mass travel has done to manners that one should be touched by courtesies such as this; but if I were running the Bergamo tourist board I would definitely promote the city's extraordinary generosity of spirit.

I had set off to Bergamo safe in the knowledge that if it turned out to be dull, I could easily nip back to Milan. In the end, I found it hard to leave, only heading back to Milan in the evening to catch the next morning's early flight. There was time to gaze at the majestic confectionery of Milan's Duomo, before asking *the hotel concierge where was* fun to eat. No fun in Milan, he replied glumly: *"Milano — città di lavoro, lavoro."* I ate decently enough at Il Cestino, round the corner from La Scala, but while Bergamo had taken care of the solitary traveller, Milan, like any big city, leaves the stranger alone.

DAVID JESSEL

PICTURES



A wonderful chapel houses the remains of Colleoni, who was born in Bergamo and became a great Venetian mercenary

FACT FILE

■ The author booked *through* CTS, 220 Kensington High Street, London W8 7RG (0171-937 3366). Return flights from Heathrow to Milan cost £94 plus £11.50 airport tax. The Italian Flight Centre (0800 129129) has flights from £123 return.

■ Where to stay: the Hotel Agnello d'Oro (035 249883) in the old town, Via Gombito 22, has double rooms for 100,000 lire (£40) per night. The Excelsior San Marco (035 366111) in the lower town is *up to* 301,000 lire (£120).

■ Car hire arranged at the airport from 78,000 lire (£31.20) per day, including insurance, plus VAT.

■ Single train fare Milan-Bergamo costs 5,000 lire (£2). Funiculars and buses are about 1,700 lire per trip.

■ *Entrance* to Accademia Carrara is 8,000 lire (£3.20). Lunch at Antica Hosteria del Vino Buono, Piazza del Mercato de Scarpe, is 25,000 lire (£10). Dinner at Milan's Il Cestino is about 60,000 lire per person (£24).

■ Airport bus from Milan is 4,500 lire (£1.80).

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Italian Journeys* by Jonathan Keates (Pan, £6.99, ISBN 0 330 32465 9). *Blue Guide: Northern Italy* by Alta Macadam (A & C Black, £14.99, ISBN 0 713 63276 3). *Lombardy, Milan and the Italian Lakes* by Dana Facaros and Michael Pauls (Cadogan, £12.99, ISBN 0 947 75476 8).

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 23

NEFANDOUS
(b) Not to be spoken of, unmentionable, abominable, atrocious. From the Latin *ne-* not + *fandus* to be spoken, the gerundive of *fari* to speak. "That spirit of nefandous impiety with which it was carried on by the Monastic Orders."

PERFLATE
(b) To blow through or ventilate. From the Latin *perflāre* to blow through. *The Soldier's Friend*, 1798: "The canvas should be drawn up every day, the straw well shaken, and perflated by the wind."

NEOMENIA
(c) In Greek and Jewish antiquity the time of the new moon, the beginning of the lunar month. Also, the festival held at that time. From the Greek *néos* new + *mēnē* the moon. "The Battle of Megiddo, fought in the neomenia of that month."

PLATINA
(a) The earlier name of platinum. The diminutive of the Spanish *plata* silver. *Philosophical Transactions*, 1754: "The substance brought into England under the name of platina appears a mixture of dissimilar particles."

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Britain: Weekend breaks with a difference, from spiritual renewal to creative ways with corpses

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROY ELLSWORTH

A tribute to the taxidermist

"And now for the most gruesome bit," said Adrian Usher, carefully scraping the brains out onto a tissue. Next it was time to pierce the eyes. "Stand back or they might spray you." They got him instead.

Taxidermy (Greek *taxis*, arrangement, *derma*, skin) is certainly not for the squeamish, and may not be ideal to read about over breakfast. But if you don't mind getting your hands dirty while learning a traditional craft, it could be the thing for you.

Mr Usher is one of Britain's few full-time taxidermists. His tiny workshop on the Norfolk/Suffolk border is filled with examples of his art — an owl, a salmon, a fox with a pheasant in its mouth. Lest anyone should think he slaughters animals to stuff them, he is at pains to point out that he mostly works with victims of road accidents. But he will take commissions for animals that have been legitimately shot. "I did six pheasants for the Queen's banqueting table at Sandringham," he says, "as well as Prince William's first woodcock." His biggest job was a red stag, which took six weeks. I had booked a day's course, along with a stockbroker and a property investor. Both were into shooting and fishing. I had never willingly handled a dead animal in my life.

Four magpies, straight out of the freezer, were waiting on the workbench with a collection of tools. "First, open the beak and stuff in some cotton wool to stem the flow of blood," Mr Usher began. Then we had to slice down the breast bone, remove the carcass, and cut the meat off the legs, tail, wings and head, keeping the skin intact and trying to keep blood off the feathers. The birds were incredibly forgiving — you could pull them apart, but after a quick blow with a hair drier the feathers looked almost alive once more. After lunch we stitched up the skin, placed glass eyes in the sockets and fastened the head, wings and feet with wires.

You won't learn enough to do it professionally, but in one day even a beginner like me can get a feel for the craft and create something unusual with which to surprise your friends. The finished product actually looked good. Honest.

It was Mother's Day and I wondered whether to present my masterpiece to my mother. Then I thought better of it. She got the azalea and I got a stuffed magpie for my study.

TONY KELLY

● *Anglian Activity Breaks (01508 492132). One-day course. £65.*

More courses. Directory, page 17

Retreat lights the way ahead

Every holidaymaker knows the story: the hard-earned break to recharge one's spiritual batteries by "getting away from it all" ends in nervous exhaustion induced by airport delays, noisy hotels, milling tourists and culture-vulturing around must-see museums.

So how do you get away from the stresses of modern life, short of locking yourself in the attic with a vacuum flask and a week's supply of sandwiches? One increasingly popular answer is to go away "within yourself" amid more conducive surroundings — at a spiritual retreat.

There are about 200 places quietly holding retreats in Britain, based on a range of beliefs from Anglican through to Jesuit, Buddhist, New Age and North American Indian. All share the aim of enabling people to find inner peace and spiritual renewal, and they receive a wide variety of visitors, from committed practitioners to businessmen seeking answers to life.

Before we start chipping away at the meaning of life, however, a couple of more pressing questions present themselves. Can you attain "inner peace" without shaving your head and doing Kung Fu on bad guys? And, perhaps more important in these secular times, can you seek "spiritual renewal" without having to sign up to a creed or cult?

To find out, I visited one of the least doctrinal retreats on offer: Gaia House, a former Anglican convent in tranquil Devon hills near Newton Abbot. The Gaia House community recently moved into the 16th-century convent from its old cramped quarters down the road. The nuns lived in remarkably basic conditions, which the new occupants have upgraded to spiritual-spartan.

Though its approach is loosely based on Buddhist meditation practices, Gaia House is non-denominational. Christopher Titmuss, a former Fleet Street journalist and Buddhist monk who is one of the retreat's leaders, says it attempts to "free the spiritual from religious overtones — to touch the deep spiritual parts within the human being to see how it applies to daily life". The community is silent, and participants observe a timetable of meditation, meals and household tasks. "These are the polar opposite to the doing-doing, busy-busy life we lead in the 1990s," Mr Titmuss says. "They are a chance to reflect on where we are and where we are going."

Swapping late-20th-century chaos for monastic austerity requires the mental equivalent of a handbrake turn. The silence of the four-day retreat feels daunting at first; like bursting into a wholefood remake of *The Prisoner*.

I found Gaia House peopled by everyday-looking types walking the flagstoned corridors with wordless purpose. How did they know what to do? The temptation to drag one of them off to a side room for a sharply-whispered interrogation mounted steadily. Fortunately for peace and harmony, one of Gaia's friendly managers shepherded me to the admin office, where talking is permitted, and explained that the trick was to read the day's programme on the noticeboard, along with instructions about food, washing-up and housekeeping that are posted around. My group was, according to Mr Titmuss, typically disparate, and included city workers and computer experts, a sportsman, an aid-worker and several visitors from overseas.

The very fact of being in a group is changed fundamentally by the regime of silence. Even for the most habitual chatterer, it makes a welcome release from the usual group-work chores of engaging in transitory friendships, rivalries, small-talk and cliquery. It is also remarkable how quickly one learns to live without words and to communicate in other, subtle ways.

The days begin and end at suitably spiritual hours: 6.30am to 10pm. First, participants are encouraged to exercise, be it yoga, tai chi or, my preferred option, a walk through the grounds. Then you join a meditation session for 45 minutes in the former convent chapel, decorated with beautiful simplicity and adorned with flowers.

The meditation method is taught on the first day: you sit upright, preferably with legs crossed, and focus on your breathing. The meditations aim to take your mind away from everyday fixations, fantasies, worries and daydreams. Certainly, they instil an otherworldly awareness of self — some kind of timeless sense of peace. I confess, however, to being no stong candidate for lamahood: it occurred to me during an early session, for example, that the retreat would make the ideal setting for a murder mystery.

The day's agenda also includes an hour's work around the house, performing chores such as cleaning and cookery. This helps the retreat community keep its church-mouse budget balanced; many staff are voluntary or nominally paid. My job was to swab down the eating areas and sweep the stairways and passages — sweep, mind, no vacuum cleaners here. The silence presented a small problem when a fellow retreatant decided to tramp across my freshly-mopped linoleum. Developing a look that speaks unpublishable volumes is perhaps one of the least positive results of my stay.

But positive results there indeed are as the days continue, with each silent session, each silent meal and meditation taking us another step away from the temporal cares of everyday life and deeper into ourselves.

For those seeking such a profound level of inner experience, it undoubtedly works, as it has for religious communities since time immemorial. I was looking, on a more simple level, for sanctuary from the urge to rush around achieving — and I found it there.

Certainly, it is not for everyone; but as we approach the Millennium and a much-heralded spiritual revival, it may become more commonplace to answer the question "Where did you go on your holidays?" by saying "Oh, I spent a few days exploring me."

JOHN NAISH

● *The author was a guest of Gaia House in Newton Abbot, Devon (01626 333613). It offers a variety of group and individual retreats; the standard cost is £30 per night.*

● *More than 300 retreats in Britain and Europe are listed in* The Good Retreat Guide *by Stafford Whitaker (Rider Imprint of Random House, £12.99).*

At Your Service, page 11

Murder most pleasant

I was in my best frock in a grand dining room. There was condensation on the glass of Chablis and I was about to start on a haddock and asparagus tartlet. The woman on my right screamed and slumped into her plate. She was dead: poison we later discovered. Instant commotion, everyone running everywhere — everyone except me that is. I was rooted to the spot. Never mind her, what about my dinner? It seemed callous to tuck in as she was being carried out, feet first.

During the next 18-odd hours of this Murder Weekend (and many were very odd indeed) we gradually became used to people popping their clogs, buying the farm, shuffling off their whatever.

The plot is intricate but the basic scenario is this: a group of actors — all convincing actors it must be said — pose as members of a wealthy but unconventional family who don't like each other. Consequently, they are disposed of in turn and we have to work out why. Like the actors, most people on murder weekends are rather out of the ordinary. On the first night we were invited to a Funny Hat Contest. "Great hat," I said to a man with a large propeller on his head. "What hat?" he said, his eyes bulging. The winner wore a pink topper three feet across.

We soon divided into two camps: the bon-viveurs, for whom the evening became a kind of Alcoholics Hieronymous, and the purists who had been six times and took things terribly seriously, scuttling after anyone they suspected and hiding behind curtains in empty rooms. Some brought video cameras and heartlessly took pictures as people slid to the floor, clutching their chests. I hope they never invite me round for dinner and a film show. I offered to buy the "chief inspector" a drink. "Not while I'm on duty, thank you," he said reprovingly. A group of real detectives who went along solved the murders in 15 minutes, which I found strangely reassuring.

We missed breakfast on Saturday but turned up for lunch to find fellow sleuths boot-faced. "Oh there you are. You'll never solve it if you don't keep up."

Murder Weekend hotels all have that old-England Agatha Christie feel to them: splendid nosh, lots of chintz, afternoon tea, poison cupboards, that sort of thing. Our room at the Whately Hall in Banbury even had a priest's hole. We found ourselves wondering if that was where the culprit had lurked. After a few hours people eyed their companions askance. Would he be next? Could it be her? Drink does terrible things to the imagination. Sunday dawned. It was like taking A levels. The sinking feeling when you turned over the question paper flooded back. It said: "Who was responsible for the murders and why?" One man, who had enjoyed the odd tipple, wrote "What murders?".

I must admit, I was totally baffled but enjoyed myself nevertheless. It's also an inexpensive weekend, if you consider the hotel and the quality of the food — two sumptuous dinners, two breakfasts and a splendid lunch.

The sudden deaths you get used to. When the last victim slumped into her main course I stole her warm bread roll. Well, she wouldn't be needing it, would she?

MARY GOLD

● *The author was a guest of TrustHouse Forte. Murder Weekends cost from £185 to £210 depending on the hotel. Details on 0345 543555.*

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Seychelles: Sailing among the mountaintops is like looking at the last crumbs of prehistory, says **Libby Purves**

Voyage through a drowned continent

We made a nightly appointment with the moon. After the tomato-ketchup sunset (6.15 precisely) it grew cool enough to cook supper. We ate on deck as the stars began to prickle through the dusk, and had washed up by the time an unearthly silver light topped the crags to the eastward. When the upper rim of the moon appeared the stars paled and shrank. Never had we seen such pouring Equatorial brilliance; certainly never in such solitude, rocking gently at anchor a thousand miles out in the Indian Ocean.

"What's next beyond that island?" somebody would eventually say, and someone else would glance at the binnacle compass and say "Africa", "Sumatra", "Antarctica" or "Arabia". Then we would all go quiet, glad to have GPS satellite navigation on board in case we drifted to another continent in the night.

Sailing under your own command in the Seychelles archipelago is extraordinary. These are the world's only granitic ocean islands: 1,000 miles out to sea you would expect volcanic shapes or low, flat, coral islands, but instead you have towering, wooded shapes more like the Hebrides. You are looking at the mountaintops of the drowned continent of Gondwanaland, the last crumbs of prehistory.

The fleet of yachts is only open to experienced sailors

This explains the eccentricity of the wildlife: enormous, mad-looking beetles, six-tailed lizards, giant coco-de-mer seeds so suggestively pubic that Gordon of Khartoum announced they were the Forbidden Fruit of Eden. There are fairy terns, which balance their eggs on bare branches, clouds of garish, red-headed fodies, paradise flycatchers and arrogant swaggering egrets like miniature storks which sneak up on you in the market and pinch fish from your shopping bag.

In the woods scuttle hairy little anteater-snouted tenrecs, and on some islands live wild giant tortoises the size of schooldesks (they were reintroduced after being nearly wiped out by hungry 19th-century sailors). This is no guidebook list: the wildlife is so cheeky that the most unobservant tourist can't miss it. Nor, in many places, can you dip a masked face in the water without beholding such a casual wealth of glittering fish that you gape (and the snorkel falls out).

The islands were properly discovered only two centuries ago, airborne tourism has only been possible for 25 years, and it is only this past yearthat the travel company Sunsail has begun to offer a small fleet of yachts to reasonably experienced charterers.

Before the Sunsail venture, the only way to explore privately by sea was to be an ocean gypsy (in which case the authorities regarded you with deep suspicion) or a passenger on a skippered boat.

I have to admit that on an earlier land-bound visit I doubted this would ever change, particularly given the Government's environmental strictness. But somehow Sunsail met all the green conditions (holding-tanks, keeping anchors off the coral and so on) and solved the practical problems. Hence our bemused moonlit evenings anchored off the white beaches of Mahé and Praslin, La Digue and Curieuse, watching the fish jump and hearing from the land the chirrup and rustle and grunt of irrepressible *Jurassic Park* life.

They try to make it easy. Our Oceanis 351 had everything: a powerful engine, vast water tanks, a showerhead on the bathing platform, awning, barbecue, fridge, fans, and cruising directions a 12-year-old could follow, to anchorages chosen for safety in either northwest or southeast monsoons (the year divides, with the least wind at changeover times in our spring and autumn). The anchor came up electrically at the pressure of a bigtoe, and sails were so easily handled from the cockpit that we began to wonder why sailing usually involves so much clambering. It was quite the cleanest boat we had ever been on (better kept than our own) and the local staff had provided our pre-ordered provisions with scrupulous care, throwing in a tin of cockroach spray just in case (though the islands, given their latitude, are surprisingly free of antisocial insects and tropical disease). But then, they have to make it easy. Four degrees south of the Equator we pasty Brits need nannying.

PICTURES

Behind the tropical, white-sand beaches is an amazing wildlife, from six-tailed lizards to paradise flycatchers and giant tortoises the size of schooldesks

Sailing and living aboard a 35ft yacht is far more strenuous in unaccustomed heat than just ambling from hotel to beach and back again. One day, as we hauled up the dinghy and picked our way through dozing Italian tourists under takamaka trees, in search of a shop that sold washing-up liquid, our paterfamilias (Yorkshiremen deteriorate in the heat) observed pithily that "yachting in paradise is still bloody yachting". Anchorages are a fair distance from shore and you are never alongside a quay except in Victoria, the enchanting capital. So dinghies must be constantly used, outboards manoeuvred on and off the stern, restaurants and food shops found and walked to, fresh water topped up, weather watched. It may rain, in sudden curtains of solid water which, while they do not last long, inevitably find their way through the hatch you have not fastened properly because you were fazed by heat, and soak Yorkshire Man's bunk-cushions. You would think a man who was feeling the heat would enjoy a nice cool wet bed, but oddly, he didn't.

But who cares? While the hotel tourists go back to their air-conditioned hutches, or wait sweating for taxis and inter-island planes, you have the freedom of the ocean: long, exhilarating reaches past miraculous islands, quiet anchorages, private meetings with enormous tortoises, and a world of circus-coloured fish and coral only a step and a splash away.

Almost best of all, you meet the Seychellois. Years of People's United Party Socialism, now relaxing into a two-party system, has left the people self-confident and the schools and hospitals good. When the international airport first opened, the Government pronounced it policy that "no tourist shall exploit our people, nor shall our people exploit the tourist". There is none of that chippy, done-down irritability which blights so many sunny destinations.

Moreover, yachtsmen and women are a novelty: coming ashore to market or explore, you are at once a welcome guest and a huge joke. Everyone wants to help; walking the lanes and the footpaths through the cinnamon-trees, you are among friends.

● *The author and her family were guests of Sunsail*

SEYCHELLES FACT FILE

■ Sunsail, The Port House, Port Solent, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 4TH (01705 222222) offers yacht charters in the Seychelles from £800 to £1,200 per person (six sharing) for two weeks, including flights by Air Seychelles to Mahé and transfers.

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Journey Through Seychelles* by Adrian Skerrett (Camerapix, £25, ISBN 1 87404 190 3). *Spectrum Guide Seychelles* (Camerapix, £12.99, ISBN 1 87404 193 8). *Mauritius, Réunion and Seychelles Travel Survival Kit* (Lonely Planet, £8.95, ISBN 0 86442 188 5).

Need a break? Call your IATA travel agent, ask to fly KLM and Air UK from your local airport, and you're off.

Outbound travel must commence between 6th January and 23rd March 1997. Subject to availability. Restrictions and departure taxes apply.

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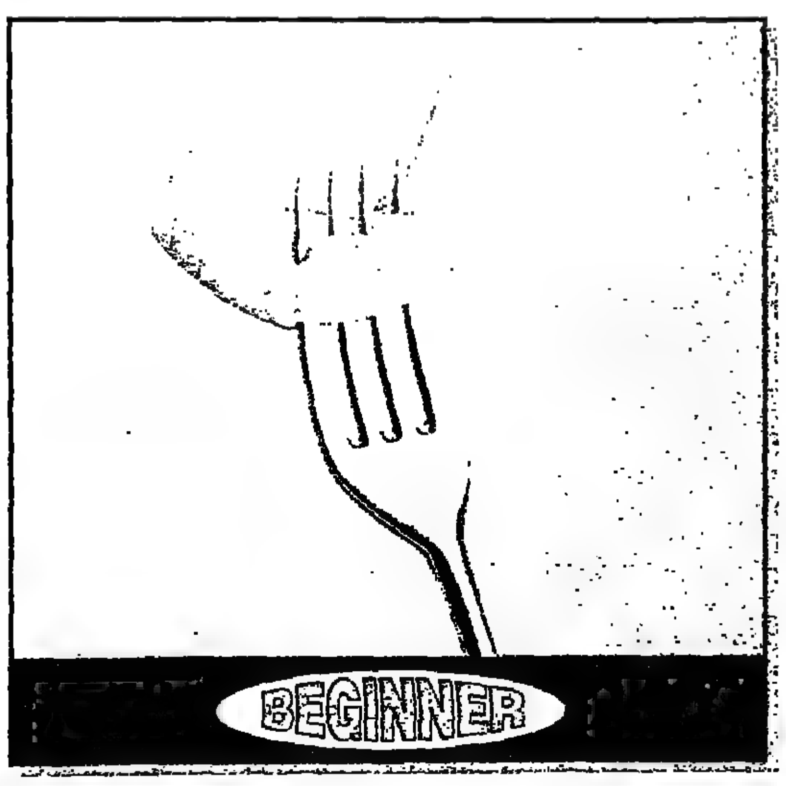

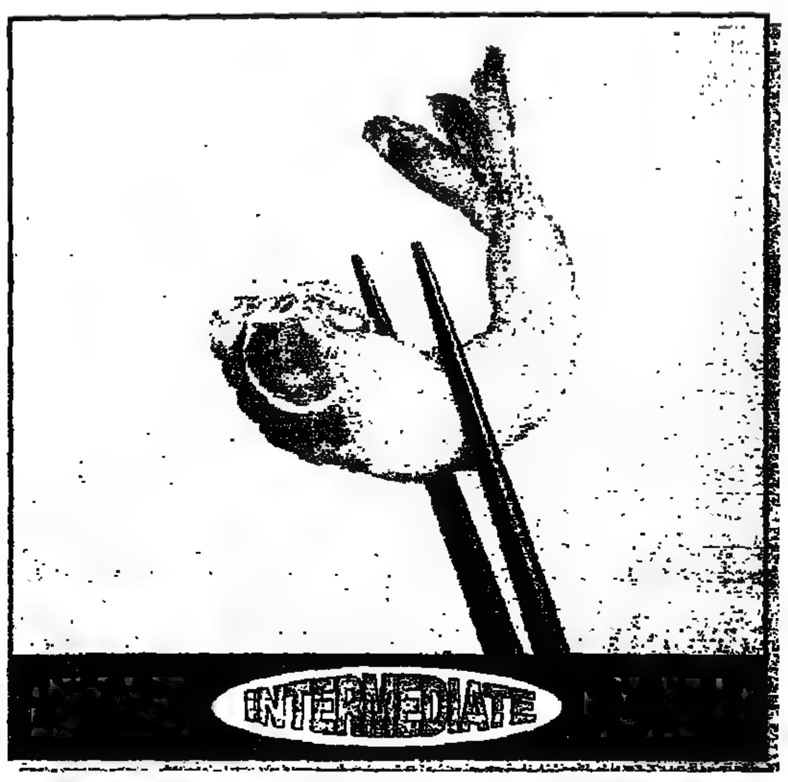

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Romania: Where even communism failed to bury the myth of Vlad the Impaler

Living in the shadow of Count Dracula

In the courtyard of King Carol's extraordinary "Victorian" summer palace in Sinaia there is a bronze dog. With worried eyes he stares at the promise of blue skies high above the ornate roofline and he is short of one leg. There are a lot of real dogs like that in Romania, three-legged and worried-looking. They sleep in the road or on the pavements, on the steps of metro stations, on the doormats outside even the grandest hotels. They are just part of the landscape — a landscape caught in a timewarp.

At one time the great plains of southern Romania fed most of Europe. Black and fertile, nurtured by the Danube and sheltered by the Carpathians, they now lie broodingly dormant, still cowed by the brutality of agricultural collectivism — everywhere rotting barrack-like shelters for animals and workers alike, fenced land squared off in bureaucratic symmetry; mute testimony to woefully inefficient social engineering and hopeless husbandry. But even these sad, lacklustre places are worth seeing before they finally rust away for ever; they are, after all, tribute to a now-historic tyranny that was just as real and just as deranged as the monstrous destruction of Bucharest itself, a city which once rivalled Paris.

The clue to Romania's magnetism, however, lies in and beyond those plains. To the north of Bucharest, to the north of Ploesti's oil-fields, are the mountains. Snow-covered peaks, vast forests where bears still maraud and which out-shine in the autumn the leaf colours of New England. Small fertile plateaux and valleys of idiosyncratic painted churches, clean rivers and streams — and "citadel" villages scarcely changed for more than a century, peopled by men and women bent under huge sacks of maize or riding carts of ancient design. The tractor and the chainsaw belong to the future. Here the past is the present — horses and oxen and axes.

In these Carpathians lies Transylvania — land of terrible legend: Vlad Dracul, Vlad the Impaler, Dracula, the Vampire. In Transylvania, myth and history combine naturally, merge into one and as a tourist attraction are welcomed and expanded. And why not? One look at Bran Castle is enough to convince even the most doubting that sometimes fact and fiction do well to go hand-in-hand. Bran chills, and although Bram Stoker, who wrote *Dracula* a century ago, never visited Bran, nor even Transylvania, his fertile imagination got it right in one.

If, alas, Dracula never actually did descend head-first down those terrible walls like some vast foul spider, then he jolly well should have done. And if Dracula never did spend his daylight hours in that huge coffer (which is now, significantly, empty — as you can find out if you dare to lift the lid), then he jolly well could have done. Why, just within sight of the ramparts, beneath Bran's walls, the heart of Queen Maria, wife of Romania's second king, Ferdinand, lies buried in a special tin box. And that is fact, not fiction.

But was Vlad Dracul really The Impaler, was he really imprisoned in that narrow cell they show you in Bran? And does it matter? Certainly the house where Vlad was born in wondrous medieval Sighisoara is there for all to see and Count Dracula's Motel and Restaurant, just outside the town, is a certain reality — so what more does anyone want? In the space of a day, the visitor can be chilled to the bone within the towering, sinister walls of Bran, stand agape at the loveliness of Sighisoara's alleyways and squares and then eat comfortingly and well in a modern roadhouse named after an English author's creation.

A visitor to a country such as Romania is never far from fairytale reality. In Sibiu, the Hotel Imparatul Romanilor, reputed to stand on the site of Europe's oldest purpose-built hostelry, is a "must" for tourists and locals alike on a Saturday night. The four-piece band plays while couples dance under a huge, ornate roof installed in 1895 which, at the touch of a button, slides back. Delightful on hot summer nights, useful in winter to release tobacco fug; an effective and instant extractor system in a country where a No Smoking notice is virtually unknown. Live music is a pleasant feature in most good hotel restaurants — the dreaded canned species is a threat yet to be realised.

In all cities, museums abound; in Sibiu the famous Brukenthal provides Rubens, Van Dyck and a delightful winter landscape by Van Alsloot, while across the noble square the dignified Roman Catholic cathedral, as elsewhere in Romania, provides comfort for an ever-increasing number of worshippers, as do the ubiquitous and riotously Byzantine Orthodox churches. Votive candles are so popular that special mini-buildings, complete with chimneys, now stand outside in the courtyards and, quick as ever to recognise a market niche where they see it, the priests of St Adormire in Brasov's Republic Square have rented out as shops the two properties on either side of their monastery's courtyard entrance.

The scale of worship in today's Romania is truly moving and is mirrored in the painstaking restoration of structures like the vast Black Church in Old Brasov or the tiny recreated detailing of ancient frescoes and reconstruction of breathtaking citadel village churches such as Prejmer and Harman.

The manic hubris of Nicolae Ceausescu, the late president, evident in most cities and grossly apparent in Bucharest, where he cut swaths of ghastly modernism through once-gracious streets, nonetheless creates intriguing images for the inquiring visitor quite apart from the grim collective farms. The black gravestones in the public squares of towns pay proper testimony to those who died in the December 1989 uprising which led to the execution of Ceausescu and his wife that Christmas Day. In Brasov itself, in the square between the Faculty of Medicine and the Post Office, are 40 graves of citizens shot by the *Securitat* and the surrounding buildings preserve the bullet-pocks in their stonework as further memorials.

Other facets of a hideous communist era are less grim. The ski resort of Poiana Brasov, for instance, is a curious example of successful "collectivisation" of tourists. They were needed for their foreign currency, yes, but how to ensure that these valuable incomers did not contaminate the local populace? Simple. Ban all locals from living where they had to work. Romanians are still forbidden to rent or own any property in Poiana — all workers have to be bussed in from Brasov.

Such bureaucratic idiosyncrasies may take a generation to eradicate, but other traditional facets of life under communist rule will become extinct much sooner: the holidaymaker must make the most of simple, if arcane, curiosities, not the least of which is that harmless hunt for a gin and tonic. Which bar in town has the tonic but no gin and which has the gin but no tonic?

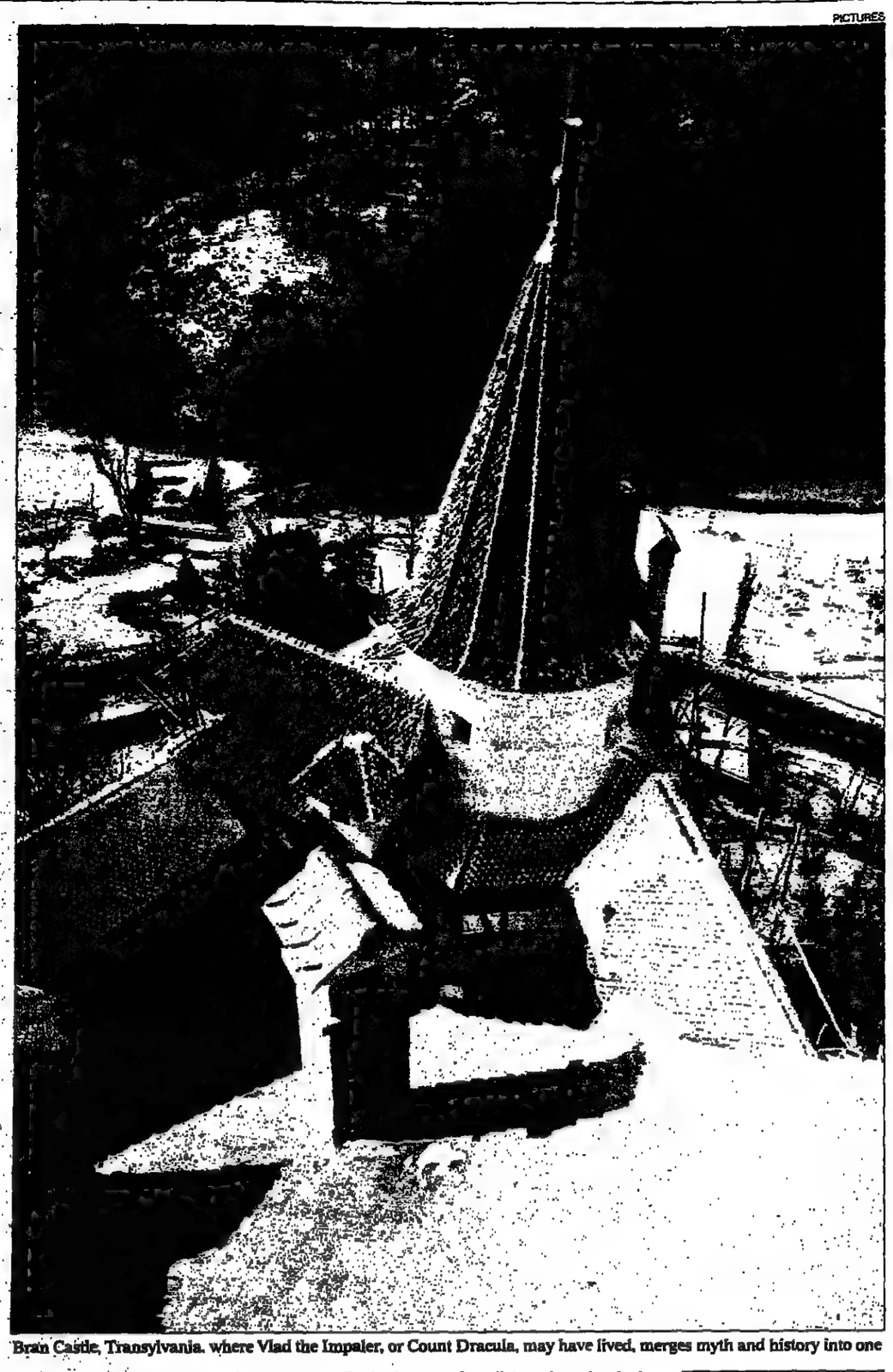
Even the "most polluted town in the world" bears its own scars of fascination. Copsa Mica, between Sighisoara and Sibiu, is known as the Black Rock. Decades of uncontrolled carbon black production have befouled not just the buildings, roofs, streets and the few trees but also totally blackened the rocky escarpment behind the town and the hills beyond.

Yet, oddly, it is these peculiarities that make Romania so delightful for the visitor. From the Black Sea resorts with their mud-bath cures to the northern mountains of Maramures, the country may well display some of Europe's poorest living standards but it is rich in fable, legend and history, both ancient and modern; it is how Europe was 50 years or more ago but never will be again. Even those dogs will one day be jostled aside by progress; they are amenable enough, they are just wary — a bit like the Romanians themselves: showing scars of the past, worried about the present, but hopeful of a brighter future.

HUGH PITT

● *The author was a guest of Saga Holidays*

PICTURES



Bran Castle, Transylvania, where Vlad the Impaler, or Count Dracula, may have lived, merges myth and history into one

JILL CRAWSHAW'S TRAVEL TIPS

Swan lake in East Anglia

A PAIR of whooper swans that have flown the 1,500 miles or so from Iceland with their cygnets to winter in East Anglia's Welney Washes are attracting a record number of visitors at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (01353 860711). A total of 1,100 whoopers, 3,311 bewick swans which brave the 2,500 mile journey from Arctic Russia, plus some 7,600 widgeon and a colourful cacophonous assortment of pintails and lapwings, teals and gadwalls, snipe, ruff, greylag geese and a solitary ean goose are squabbling over the Washes' rich pickings.

The swans and their families return each October, leaving in March, for up to 18 years. They are the ideal family unit, remaining faithful to their partners for life and proving excellent parents. The Trust is open every day with floodlit Swan Lake evenings five times a week: entry £3.

Cycle rides

BIKING tours from adventure specialists Exodus (0181-675 5550) range from Saigon to Hanoi in Vietnam and the Sierra Madre in Mexico, the most popular routes being Morocco's Atlas Descent and High Atlas Traverse. Among the new tours, a 15-day journey following the Pilgrim Route to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, with overnight stays in some of the original pilgrims' lodges, costs £850. A 17-day South Africa trip freewheeling round the Garden Route, the Cape and the Winelands costs £1,575.

Flights, some meals and accommodation are included in the prices. Mechanics accompany each trip and the average age is 33.

Prague life

WITH hotel accommodation in short supply in Prague, the apartments of Interhome (0181-891 1294) in and around the city could be useful for independent travellers prepared to stay for a week. Prices start at £302 for a flat sleeping up to four. The accommodation agency, Europe's largest, has more than 100 homes for rent throughout the country. A home in Rudikov which can take up to five, with bikes for holidaymakers to explore the hills of Bohemia Moravia and the medieval town of Trebic eight miles away, costs £153 a week.

Cairo nights

CITY BREAKS to the Middle East from Cox & Kings (0171-873 5000) include four nights in Cairo from £495 B&B; Jerusalem from £595; Abu Dhabi from £615; Damascus from £725, and the increasingly popular beach and shopping city, Dubai, from £625. A long weekend (four nights) in the once-lost now much-discovered 2,000-year-old Nabatean city of Petra, with visits to Jerash and two nights in Amman, costs from £795 half-board.

Greek extras

THE island of Skopelos has been added to the programme of the somewhat confusingly named Corfu a la Carte (01635 201140) which also offers holidays in Paxos, Symi and Skiathos, as well as Corfu and Skopelos.

The firm specialises in traditional properties: in Skopelos, a fisherman's cottage for four in the Old Town, with walled courtyard and lemon tree, costs from £304-£489 for one week, £389-£599 for two weeks. The Hotel Aliki, a former sea captain's mansion on the waterfront at Symi and one of the most interesting old hotels in the Aegean, costs from £389 B&B per week.

Aeolian tour

THOUGH great favourites with Italian holidaymakers, the Aeolian Islands feature in few British brochures. Magic of Italy (01233 211610), however, will get you to Vulcano and Lipari where a week's self-catering costs from £425 half-board in a hotel from £569. A week's Discovering the Aeolian Islands tour of Lipari, Filicudi, Panarea, Stromboli and Salina costs from £819, but is not available in high season.

Correction: The Galápagos are off Ecuador and Machu Picchu is in Peru and not in Chile and Patagonia, as stated last Saturday.

FACT FILE

■ Saga Holidays (0800 300 500) offers ten-day touring holidays from £499 per person, departures from April to October. Cox & Kings (0171-873 5000) offers a 15-day tour starting on May 24 at £1,250 per person.

■ British Airways (0345 222111) flies London/Bucharest from £375 return. Tarom (0171-224 3693) flies direct to Bucharest every day except Friday, from £236 return.

■ In Bucharest, the Flora Hotel charges £40 per night for a double room. In Sinaia, the Hotel Palace costs from £20 per night. In Poiana Brasov, the Alpin Hotel charges up to £40 per night. In Sibiu, the Imparatul Romanilor charges from £20 a night.

■ The Romanian Tourist Board, 83a Marylebone High Street, London W1M 3DE (0171-224 3692) has free brochures.

■ Where to eat: Most towns have good restaurants for the locals, such as La Gustari in Republic Square, Brasov, and the old-fashioned brasserie Carul cu Bere in Calea Victoriei, Bucharest. The best place to eat in Bucharest is the former Writers Club, now the Casino Palace. Both these famous institutions escaped the awfulness oof Ceausescu's "reforms". Three outstanding dishes are *mititei* (often seen on menus as *mici*) which are small rissoles of minced mixed meats, *tochitura*, a meat stew, and the ubiquitous *cascaval pane*, cheese fried in breadcrumbs eaten either as a starter or with meat dishes.

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Out of Romania* by Dan Antal (Faber, £14.99, ISBN 0 571 17220 2). *Transylvania and Beyond* by Dervla Murphy (Arrow, £6.99, ISBN 0 099 20601 3). *Romania, The Rough Guide* by Dan Richardson and Tim Burford (Rough Guides, £9.99, ISBN 1 858 28097 4).

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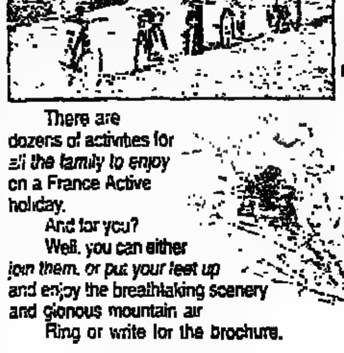

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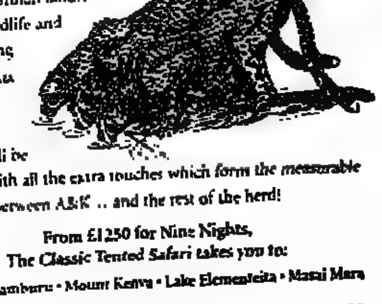

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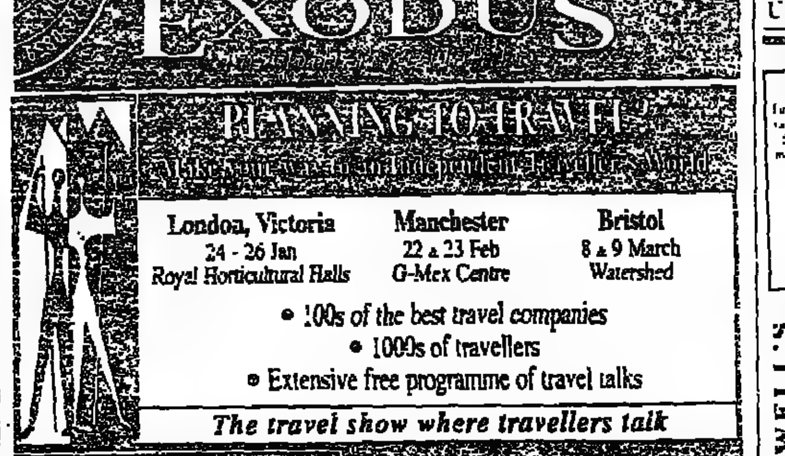

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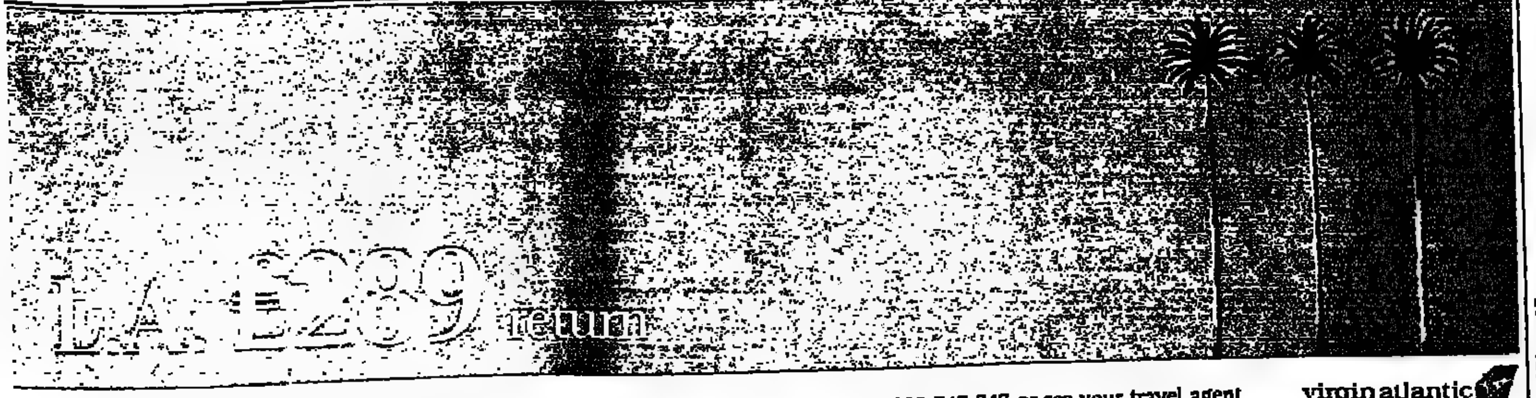

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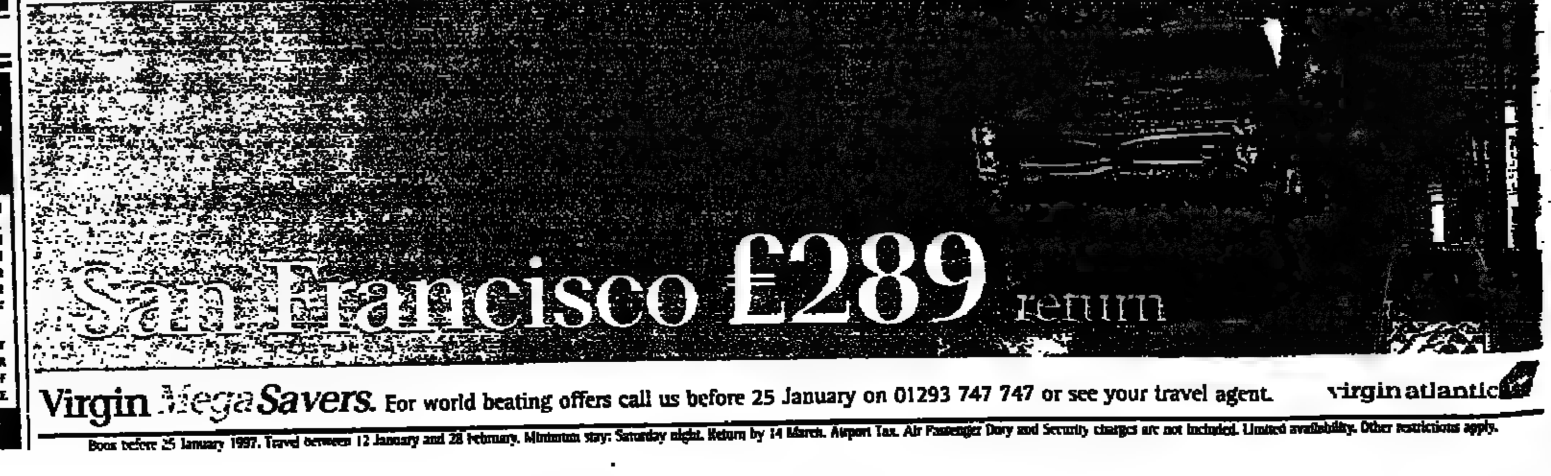

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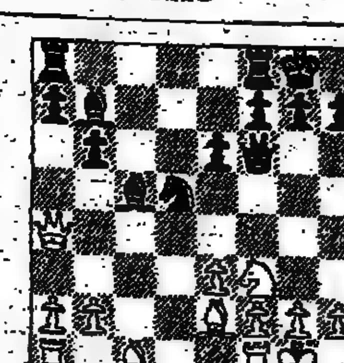
هكذا من الأصل

CHESS

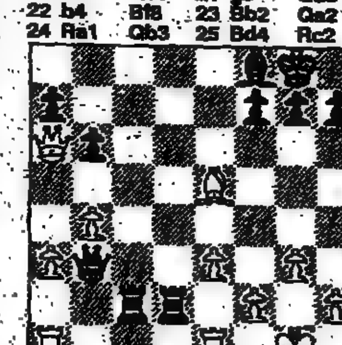
by Raymond Keene

N the New Year with ... to grandmaster Harry ...ek, who was chess correspondent of *The Times* for several ... until 1985 and was regar... ...iany as the world champi... ...ss writers. Golombek was ...admirer of the style and ...ents of the Cuban world ...n, Capablanca, and in ...olombek brought out a ... collection of 100 of ...nca's best games, fur... ...ith deep annotations. ...me time now this outstand... has been out of print, but ...en re-issued in the simpli... ...lern notation used in this (rather than the old and ...ome English descriptive ... with some revisions by ...aster Dr John Nunn. ...lanca's forte was the accu... of small advantages, a ...quare here, an open file ...d it was amazing to see ...could weave apparently ...and, of themselves, insig... ...etails into an overwhelm...y. Capablanca's greatest ...came at the New York ...nt of 1927. Here he not ...done major rivals such as ... Nimzowitsch, Vidmar ...mann, but also produced ...imperishable interest. In ...ing encounter he reduces ...at strategist, Aron ...sch, author of the strate... *My System*, to utter ...ss.



The upshot of the opening is that Black's pieces are far more effectively placed, and he will be the first to seize the central files with his rooks. Nimzowitsch now struggles manfully to avoid disadvantage and implements a rigorous policy of exchanges.

14 Ba6 Bxa6 15 Qxa6 Nb4 16 Qe2 Rfd8 17 a3 Nd3 18 Ne1 Nxe1 19 Rxe1 Rac8 20 Rb1 Qe5 21 g3 Qd5 22 b4 Bf8 23 Bb2 Qa2 24 Ra1 Qb3 25 Bd4 Rc2



Given the symmetrical pawn structure, the nature of Capablanca's advantage is such that if White effects further exchanges, he will hold on for a draw. Capablanca's solution to this is brilliant.

...Nimzowitsch: Black: ...ca New York 1927. ...Gambit Declined

... Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 ... d5 4 e3 Be7 ... 0-0 6 Bd3 c5

...pening has been unpre... but not necessarily bad. ... example, 7 b3 is quite ... Nimzowitsch's move, the first of a whole series ...accuracies which gradu...ine: first to give away the ...and then to suck White ...s difficulties.

... Na6 8 0-0

...3 should be sufficient for

... Nxc5 9 Be2 b6 ... Nxd5 11 Nb3 Bb7 ... Bxc5 13 Qa4 Qf6

28 Qb7

The sparkling point to Black's play. If 28 Rf1 Qxe3 29 fxe3 Rg2+ 30 Kh1 Rxh2+ 31 Kg1 Rcg2 mate 28 ... Rxf2 29 g4 Qc6 30 Bg3 Rxh2

The final blow. If now 31 Bxh2 Qxg4+ 32 Kh1 Qh3 and mate is unavoidable.

31 Qf3 Rhg2+ 32 Qxg2 Rxg2+ 33 Kxg2 Qxg4 34 Rad1 h5 35 Rd4 Qg5 36 Kh2 a5 37 Re2 axb4 38 axb4 Be7 39 Re4 Bf6 40 Rf2 Qd5 41 Re8+ Kh7 White resigns

● *Capablanca's Best Games by grandmaster Harry Golombek is published by Batsford at £16.99.*

WINNING MOVE

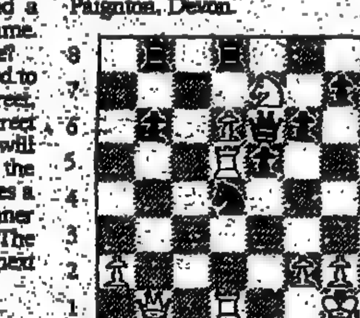
...Raymond Keene

...play. This position is from ... Abrosimov - Ambainis, ...5. Here White found a ...y to swiftly end the game. ...pot his key first move? ...answer on a postcard to ...s, 1 Pennington Street, ...1 9XN. The first correct ...rawn on Thursday will ...ar's subscription to the ...Society, which includes a ...tion to the annual dinner ...on's-in-the-Strand. The ...ill be published next ...

...s solution: 1 Rg8+ ...'s winner: R Beswick, ...heshire.

Solution to December 21 Winning Move: Qxg6

December 21 winner: J. Stuart, Paignton, Devon.



PUNCHLINE

READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon (right), from *The Strand Magazine* (reproduced from Westminster Libraries, Sherlock Holmes Collection, Marylebone Library).

The cartoon will be printed again next week on the Games page with a caption from those submitted. Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: Strand Caption 35, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, January 8.

"It's Weight Watchers for you my lad"
The Christmas Punchline was won by G. Collins of Solihull

"I don't think marriage guidance is working"
The New Year Punchline was won by M. Wilton of Plympton St Maurice

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

NEFANDOUS
a. Left-handed
b. Abominable
c. Unfathomable

PERFLATE
a. Happy to be tardy
b. To ventilate
c. To talk through

NEOMENIA
a. A passion for the new
b. Menstruation
c. New moon time

PLATINA
a. Old platinum
b. A wooden dish
c. A bone in the skull

Answers on page 16

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

HERE IS my marking for the Christmas Bridge Quiz:

1 Seven tricks (10 points): eight tricks (5 points).
2 (i) Run the diamonds throwing dummy's ace of hearts (5); (ii) this gains when one hand holds four clubs and both major-suit kings (5).
3 4NT (10); Two Hearts (5).
4 Low spade (10); king or queen of spades (5).
5 Play the king of hearts (5), and if it holds switch to spades (5).

The winners will be announced next week. Over the next few weeks I will analyse the answers, starting with question 4. You had to lead against 3NT from:

♠KQ1032 ♥A62 ♦754 ♣63

The auction has been:

1NT 2C
2S 3NT

Marks: Low spade, 10 points, high spade, 5 points; others: 0.

Despite the fact that your right-hand opponent has called spades, that suit still represents your best chance, whether the 1NT opening is weak or strong. However, when leading a suit in which the declarer is known to have at least four cards, it is important to make use of any high card your partner has. If you lead high and find your partner with Ax or Jx, the suit will be blocked.

Another layout where the low card is necessary is shown at the top of the next column. Declarer wins the first spade with the nine, crosses to dummy with the king of clubs and leads the queen of hearts. If East is having a good day, he will rise with the king of hearts and

	North	
	♠65 ♥QJ104 ♦QJ8 ♣AK102	
West: ♠KQ1032 ♥A62 ♦754 ♣63	N / W E / S	East: ♠87 ♥K95 ♦10932 ♣J975
	♠AJ94 ♥873 ♦AK6 ♣Q84	
	South	

Contract 3NT by South
Lead: the three of spades

continue spades. (Playing the king of hearts can never cost a trick — if declarer has Ax, West will have a fourth-round winner.) West can then knock out South's ace of spades. Declarer tests the clubs but when they fail to divide he has to try another heart, enabling West to take the setting trick in spades.

If West's opening lead is the king of spades, declarer will duck. Now when East gets in with the king of hearts, and plays a spade, declarer can play the nine, and when West takes the ten declarer will still have two stoppers.

Whenever you decide to make your opening lead in a suit bid by the declarer, you should look out for plays of this sort.

The pips are extremely important: eg, if you were leading from Q J 10 3 2 of a suit bid on your right you should lead the three. And if you decide to attack from Q J 10 7 2, the two is usually right — if the declarer has five of the suit the seven may blow a trick. Your partner should be aware that you may have to lead the two from a five-card suit.

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott

IF YOU have not yet entered Cyberspace Twenty-Nine you do still have the chance to win yourself the happiest new year but you will have to be quick. The deadline is first post on Tuesday (January 7).

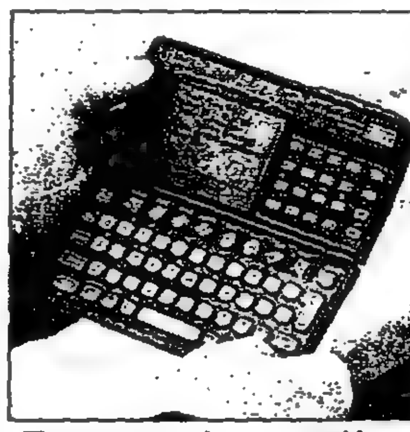
Star prize is a state-of-the-art AST Advantage computer worth £2,799. On top of that, three runners-up will each scoop Psion Siena palmtops worth £229 each. The AST Advantage 9306 multimedia computer boasts a powerful 200 MHz Intel Pentium processor, 32 Mb EDO Ram, cavernous 3Gb hard-disc, full-screen MPEG playback, eight-speed CD-Rom drive, sub-woofer speakers and generous 17in colour monitor. It is easily capable of running the most demanding games on the market. Included in this definitive package is a Wingman Extreme joystick, Windows 95 and 11 software titles.

The three Psion Sienas are also top-of-the-range models, with a full 1Mb memory. Ultra slim and compact, the features include spreadsheet, appointment diary, world clock and multi-alarms and searchable databases. It is PC compatible, to make light work of importing and exporting files plus all-important backing-up needs, and will also "talk" to other Sienas.

The competition is open to all ages. All you have to do is come up with a ludicrous *Viz*-style *Top Tip for computer users* — the more outlandish the better. Send your entry on a postcard, with your name, age, address and phone number to: Cyberspace Twenty-Nine, Computer Games and Pastimes, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The judges will not enter into any correspondence and normal Times competition rules apply.

The first half of 1997 threatens to be dominated, in gaming terms, by the arrival on British soil of Nintendo's latest console, the **Nintendo 64**. This uses a 64-bit microprocessor specially designed by Silicon Graphics, a leading computer workstation maker in California. The Nintendo 64 boasts superlative, silky graphics to push console expectations to new, higher levels. It serves up fully rounded figures who can turn on their heels and rotate through 180 degrees, just like animated characters in cartoons.

The enhanced graphics also add bucketloads of detail, such as



Three runners-up in our competition will win Psion Siena palmtops worth £229

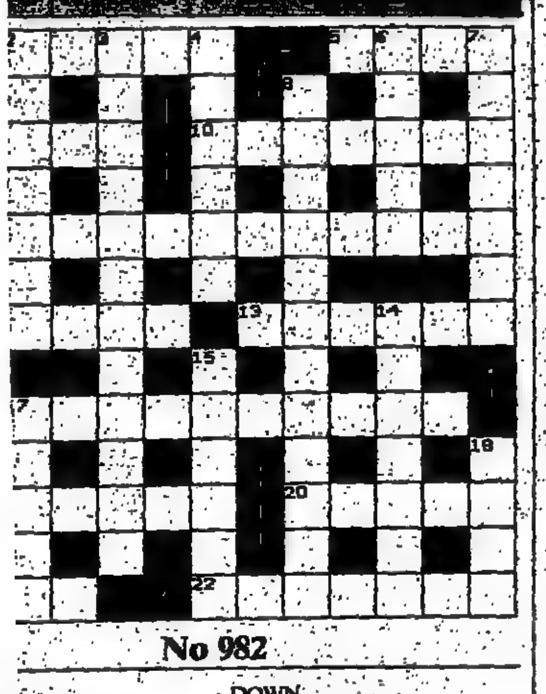
shadows and reflections. Despite such mesmerising performance, Nintendo and its new model have both been beset by problems of late. Until now Nintendo hasn't released anything to replace its dated 16-bit Super NES console, which first appeared in 1990. Having stayed out of the console race since then, allowing the Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation meanwhile to mop-up with 32-bit systems. In the past financial year, to March 1996, Sega overtook Nintendo in total sales for the first time and launch dates for the Nintendo 64 were put back several times. It was eventually released in Japan in July, six months later than scheduled, and in America about three months ago. The company claims that by Christmas it had notched up over a million sales in the United States. Shortage of supply led to hysteria in stores — a grandmother from Illinois was so desperate in her quest that she was arrested for assault.

Nintendo will be doing all it can to trigger similar excitement in the UK for its launch here on March 1. Without the impetus of Christmas shopping, the company will manufacture drought conditions to nurture headlines — just 20,000 units are earmarked for the UK in its first month. Only gamers with a short memory are likely to camp out next month for the chance to be one of the country's first Nintendo 64 owners. If there were lessons to be learnt from the Saturn and PlayStation launches it was that the console is only as good as the available software — and only now are there a decent 20 or so titles in either format worth every penny of their £44-plus price-tags.

Though the Nintendo 64 has received critical acclaim for its dazzling graphics, the company has been hit by a lack of enough suitable software to show off the machine. The first four Nintendo games intended for release here alongside the console are Super Mario 64 and Pilot Wings 64, sequels to Super NES titles, Star Wars — Shadows of the Empire and Wave Race 64.

Another problem Nintendo faces in the UK, like Sega and Sony, is the increase in sales of more versatile multimedia computers. The Nintendo 64 will sell for £249, in a year when we can expect several companies to follow Acer's early lead with good multimedia computers for less than £1,000.

"Stop onlookers touching your computer by building a small greenhouse in your home — so they can watch but not touch. Also protects your computer from roof leaks." Cyberspace Twenty-Nine Top Tip entry from Ian Mactavish of Romney Marsh, Kent.



No 982

DOWN
1 Loud, confused sound (4)
2 The — in the Rye (*Salinger*) (7)
3 Have a tantrum (*slang*) (5,1,6)
4 Toil (6)
6 Cut in two (5)
7 Kitchen furniture (7)
8 Government borrowing (8,4)
12 Indication of illness (7)
14 Stylish confidence (7)
15 Fungus, stalk and gilled cap (6)
17 Recess for statue (5)
18 Kill (4)

...by singer (7) ...ithouse (4) ...(5) ...ots; *liberal* (*anag.*) ...ssion (4,8) ...d killer (6) ...belief (4-8) ...lenging for ball (7) ...ally well (5) ...ing (4) ...nd forks (7)

...TO NO 981
...Stoic 7 Accused 8 Crimson 9 Ashtray 11 Elicit ... 15 Lubricant 19 Gallic 21 Shut-eye 23 Vestige ... 5 Spoor
... Sacré Coeur 2 Origin 3 Cosmic 4 Cana 5 Rustic ... String 12 Touchy 14 Cushion 16 Return 17 Tarsus ... Even

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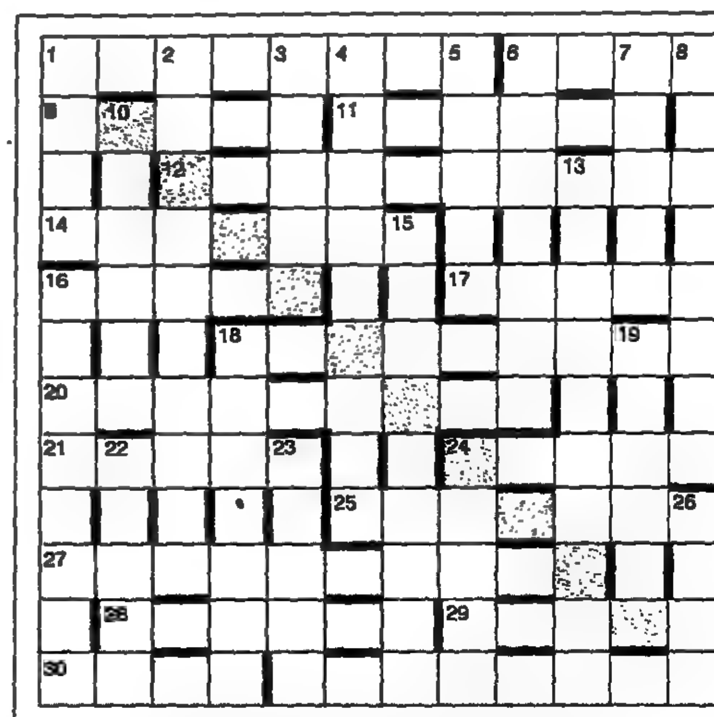
THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3391: Pas Si Ton by Kea

ACROSS
1 Might they work cures with internal cut? (8)
6 Injecting heroin is a game for speed freak (4)
9 Drill without right bit (5)
11 Darkness, alias lightness (6)
12 Sugar fermented honey-guide closed in without call (10)
14 Stimulant curtailed a deterioration by drug-taker (7)
16 I regulate upheaval very selectively (5)
17 Shaggy towel (5)
18 One following his bent, into coastal scombroid? (9)
20 A concertina or rattles on this elaborate piece? No! (9)
21 Brick? French designer might be more like it! (5)
24 Woolly's needed against shivering fit (5)
25 Obstacles put around French island — they help against floods (7)
27 Short gun cracks louder when recoiling, further study shows (10; in OED)
28 Double, delicate shot, ruined (6)
29 Record of chest pain knocking GI out (5)
30 Reproductive cells discovered in Kansas City (4)
31 Promise freshly cropped fruit (8)

DOWN
1 What was parcelled up by seceders, suddenly? (4: abbrev.)
2 One radar site mobilises and lights up (10)
3 Seamen, when sounding, have little wattled fish-trap (5)
4 Shandy-maker divides attention to make one from Manhattan, maybe (9)
5 French measures ignored time and time again in accords (5)
6 Shifting glei absorbs sap, decaying vegetable matter (7)
7 Charisma that's surprising about politician (5)
8 Joint dubious outburst exercises raised fist, suddenly powerful (8)
10 Bound navigation aid within type of scanner (6)
13 Here's me clutching invite to accompany one big fish (10)
15 'E is involved in brickbat tossing? (9)
16 Devious sibyl captivates prince with remarkable effrontery (8)
18 Low dog hunting one small boat (7)
19 It may involve distressing gain, eg spreading (6)
22 Lavatory missing one of pots? (5)
23 Difficulty storing irrational information? More than a bit! (5)
24 Perennial, like an item in a series that's unending (5)
26 New line in pizza garnishes (3)



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in association with Waterstone's

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Cut out and send the completed crossword and coupon above to The Listener Crossword No 3391, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE, by Thursday, January 16.

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F	C	A	P	I	A	S	R	A	V	I	A	N
T	H	I	S	T	L	E	I	N	H	A	N	D
H	A	S	D	A	L	H	A	B	O	D	E	S
E	L	M	O	L	O	O	P	A	E	Y	C	E
B	L	E	S	S	N	W	E	N	T	W	A	Y
E	Y	R	E	S	H	E	N	D	S	I	D	E
S	E	N	E	C	A	N	N	P	O	S	E	D
T	T	E	A	H	T	O	Y	S	P	E	N	S
L	I	S	S	E	S	R	M	O	S	P	I	T
U	L	T	I	M	O	B	A	R	G	A	T	E
G	E	O	D	E	M	T	R	I	O	G	S	A
S	O	M	E	R	E	E	L	C	N	E	R	K

Solution to No 3388: No-no by Obiter

The theme is omission of either a number by name or the word 'no'. The unclued lights are phrases or hyphenated compounds, the first word of which, one of the numbers one to ten, is omitted. In sequence they are: 7, 25, 28, 15, 47, 1Dn, 37, 51, 23, and 5Dn. The full answers to the normal clues are: Across: 2 *piano* s, 16 *hasten*, 26 *bone* less, 32 *height* en, 33 *no*-side, 39 *Pennine* s, 41 *lione* sses, 43 *three* pit, 52 net*work*. Down: 3 *no* ups, 9 *no* ria, 10 *cano* n, 11 cha*lone*, 17 *no* dose, 18 *no* how, 33 *snoops*, 35 *nooner*, 42 some*one*, 43 page-*three*, 45 le*onine*, 48 *four* gon. The words omitted from the other clues are indicated in context. Across: 1 *One-time secret*, 5 *Forgotten* thanks, 13 caging *five* of, 14 *No* good 19 *Porten* is, 21 about *no* vice, 22 which *one* traveller, 29 *One* having 34 *scene one* needed, 36 puzzled *no* longer, 44 out *one* lunar, 49 of iron*stone* ill-formed, 50 Any *three* people. Down: 2 Step round *one*, 4 with *five* missing, 6 he "*One* Fine Day", 8 Caesar's *five* in, 20 in *ten* years, 24 game *two* up 27 years *no* longer, 30 Hairy *two*-legged, 31 *One* making, 36 treated *one* hapless, 40 Asi*nine* would, 46 put *one's* foot

The winner is H. Massey of Brimpsfield, Gloucestershire.

The two runners up are: A.G. Sugden of Bingley, West Yorkshire and Jeff Dale of Abingdon, Oxfordshire.

W
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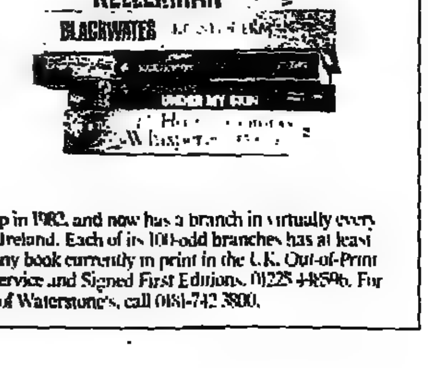

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AGED, battered crone, inveterate backpacker, seeks pleasant footloose young man with whom to mooch about sunny countries, his expenses paid. Please Reply to Box No 2279

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ASIAN very attractive, 32, N/S, WLTM handsome man 30-45 for romantic adventure. Photo/tel no. London based. Please Reply to Box No 2262

BEAUTIFUL professional French woman, Beds. area, seeks the companionship of a true gentleman. Reply to Box No 2271

BEAUTIFUL wealthy woman seeks beautiful wealthy man (55+). Reply to Box No 2256 ☎

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CAPTIVATING, carefree, curvaceous blonde, 47. WLTM charming, courteous, clever, caring man 55-70. London based. Reply to Box No 2255 ☎

CHIC, slim, feminine 45 of wit & imagination seeks inspiration of successful, caring N/S prof man 50-60 to enhance already happy life. London/ Herts/ Cambs/Essex. Photo. Box 2257 ☎

CLASSY lady tall slim, attractive 42, enjoys life, many interests incl the Arts, travel, sport WLTM successful, tall (6ft +), attractive professional/ businessman, N/S for friendship & romance. Midlands. Photo essential. Box No 2264

CLASSY redhead with beauty, brains & body seeks real man for 1997. Tall, fit, attractive, charismatic & fun 45-55. London/Surrey/Southwest. Photo please to Box No 2233 ☎

COMPROMISE is what it's all about - tired of being independent & strong, this auburn haired, occasionally outrageous, dynamic lady WLTM a man 48-58 who still remembers how to treat a woman. If you are solvent, fit, amusing, interesting & can play golf, enjoy living well, even better! London based. Photo/tel no. Box 2258

DEVON/Cornwall. For Special People for 1997 - Call Elite Introductions 01803 845512

EARLY 40's Surrey Miss favours skiing on the piste or oysters & champagne. Conversely fish & chips in the rain. If you're around 6 ft tall, also a sharing, caring, happy, successful, sociable soul, then you'll get my vote. So tell me about you in a note. Box 2223

SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS

LADIES

ESSEX/Suffolk. Elite Introductions, for prof and business people. 0800 845675

EXASPERATED offspring (now flown the nest) seeks male 45+ with integrity, humour & financial security for lively, attractive, intelligent, financially independent widowed mum. Needs to be treated with care & respect. Must like theatre, opera, sailing, walking & dining out. Southeast & Hants. Photo/tel no. preferably Box 2239

GENUINE, gregarious & gorgeous lady (35), very fit, well travelled seeks similar in a man for happy times with a view to a relationship. Surrey based. Photo please to Box No 2231

GERMANY -Fraulein, 45 years young, attractive, sensitive, would like to meet a gentleman, intelligent, sincere. Please Reply to Box No 2228

GRADUATE female 38 seeks discerning male who'll appreciate a slim, stylish, creative, gentle soul. Enjoys countryside, antiques, teaching keep fit. Determined to find Mr Right in '97 & ultimately have a family. Must be tall with oodles of personality & warmth, enjoying quality life style, Kent based. Photo please to Box No 2216

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HAPPY New Love. Bournemouth 20m radius. No 1 for 100's of lovely ladies waiting now. Elite Introductions 01202 891600

LADY 41 intelligent, attractive, independent looking for a loving & caring relationship without living together. Oxon. Photo preferred. Box No 2269

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NOTTS, Leics, Lincs, for 100's of quality ladies, call now for free details Elite Introductions 0115 9376104

ONE Golf Nut required, 50-60 yrs, tall, very attractive, fun and London based. Photo please. Reply to Box No 2272

SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS

LADIES

OUTGOING, attractive, tactile professional lady, flexible & cultured in her 40's of lively persona, living Home Counties seeks N/S counterpart with view to meaningful relationship. Photo/tel no. to Box 2245 ☎

PROFESSIONAL lady 38, N/S, tall, attractive, blonde, elegant WLTM tall prof gent, honest, caring, funloving with SOH. N/S. Photo essential for replies. Northwest area. Box 2263

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SPORTY attractive, slim, professional, GSOH, female 30 seeks similar man for fun & hopefully more. M25/M1. Photo/tel no. to Box No 2242 ☎

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WARRINGTON/Cheshire area. On your own and rather not be? Gentlemen make it happen in 1997! Join Elite Introductions We have some very special & attractive ladies waiting to meet you. 0151 737 2199

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CLASSIC cars, horseracing & football are some of the passions of this auburn-haired stunning Caucasian, financially independent, N/S, feminine & charismatic lady. I want a real man, caring & generous of temperament 45-60 to restore sparkle, love & laughter to life. Photo/tel no. please. Warks/ Northants/Leics. Box 2205

BUCKS lady, 50, attractive, caring, tactile, unused to being spoilt, seeks tall, attractive, successful, caring, unattached male 45-55 for 2 way TCL. Photo/ tel. no. to Box No 2043

BEWITCHING brunette, intelligent, stylish, 50, with GSOH, WLTM intelligent charming, considerate gentleman over 40. London based. Reply Box 2084 ☎

LADIES

COOKERY loving, arty, 40 yr old stunning prof female, seeks handsome romantic, tall, well educated, business/prof gent n/s 35-45 London/Kent Bx2112 ☎

BUBBLY, slim, attractive, professional lady (36) just returned after 10 yrs in Sweden seeks a very special professional gentleman (N/S) with whom to rediscover Britain, the outdoors & finer things in life. London area. Box No 2152

BUCKS lady, 50, attractive, caring, tactile, unused to being spoilt, seeks tall, attractive, successful, caring, unattached male 45-55 for 2 way TCL. Photo/ tel. no. to Box No 2043

MATURE Oriental lady, stuck in the same relationship for 9 years & unhappy. Are you a caring, romantic gentleman (40-50) ready for commitment. London based. Box No 2140

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LADIES

NEW YEAR - New Beginning. Mad about golf. Young at heart. West Kent widow WLTM gentleman soulmate 50+ to care & share. Interests the Arts to Zabaglione. Photo. Box No 2141 ☎

SANTA sought by happy, successful, solvent, n/s, Leicester lady, considered attractive. 60. Loves country walks with the dog and politics. Box No 2117 ☎

SINGLE lady & not loving it! 33. Done the housewife/mother bit. Looking for unpretentious, impulsive, romantic man to put that sparkle back into my hazel green eyes. E Anglia Photo to Box No 2172

SLIM, generous, attractive & classy lady WLTM successful gentleman 40-50 to share my life forever. Hants based. Photo Please to Box No 2127 ☎

TALL & Durham based [illegible] prof working widow, young 52, WLTM prof single businessman. Reply Box 2109 ☎

GENTLEMEN

ABOUT our New Year - Gentleman 60, 6'11", grey hair, very smart, healthy, N/S seeks lady of substance, chemistry, happiness & disposition essential for life together. Channel Isles or America. Photo please to Box No 2219

ADVENTUROUS(career & outlook), fit, graduate 39, professional, smart, honest & caring. N/S. Enjoys all sports (skiing, hiking, etc) & travel with many other interests. WLTM lady 28-38 to share the ups & downs of life. Surrey based. Recent photo/tel no. to Box No 2226

AIRLINE pilot, 45, tall, slim, slightly unconventional, new to London scene, motor bike enthusiast, loves travel, exotic cooking etc. WLTM slim, funloving lady. Photo please. ALA. Reply to Box No 2267

ALFA GTV, newly parked in London, seeks fun-loving female under 40 to help Male, 44, drive off into the sunset. Only seats two - no room for baggage! Photo essential. Reply to Box No 2270

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ARE you female 20/33 years, like having a good time. I'm young at heart, retired, just finished relationship with a girl from overseas, only mixed with young people & friends. Looking for female to share holidays, eating out, theatre, good humour, disco. I live in Mayfair and holiday home in Spain. Reply to Box No 2220

ATTRACTIVE, romantic, prof, 27, int'l traveller, enjoys culture & outdoors. Seeks soulmate UK-overseas. Box No. 2253 ☎

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BLUE-EYED & balding professional (38) still feeling 20 WLTM someone to share evenings at home in 200 yr old cottage, frequent jaunts to France & loads of laughs with a view to long term commitment. Surrey based. Photo please to Box No 2277 ☎

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SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS

GENTLEMEN

CARPE DIEM - I would like to find a beautiful and charming lady (over 40) who, like me, is unattached, N/S and living in London to share city life, romance, travel (mainly USA) and future. Photograph essential. Reply to Box No 2207

CHARISMATIC but caring MD, 40's, into African safaris, racing & the fast lane. Has everything but the girl. Seeks petite, chic, slim, attractive, feisty, outgoing partner 28-40 for genuine fun, romance & long term relationship. Northeast/ Yorks. Reply with photo/tel no. to Box No 2247

CREATIVE professional man, successful Oxbridge graduate (57), no ties, active and energetic, interests include classical music, travel, theatre, arts generally, socialising, gardening, sport and keeping fit. Busy lifestyle, but now reformed workaholic. Would like to meet articulate and intelligent warm-hearted professional/ academic woman for caring relationship and marriage if compatible: preferably willing to consider starting or extending a family. Photo appreciated and returned. London and south-east area. Box No 2276

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ELIGIBLE, successful, stylish, highly attractive (apparently!), fun, 6'ft Jewish male, 30's with enviable life style. Would like to share it with special, stylish alluring girl. Photo appreciated. London based. Reply Box 2241

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EX-PUBLIC school type young gentleman of a spiritual nature seeks a lady of similar qualities who enjoys good food, the countryside & animals. N/S essential & no divorcees, age 35 max. Surrey/Hants/London. Photo please to Box No 2125

EX-WIFE wanted, 55/65, free to live SW France/SW London (50/50), N/S, who skis, plays tennis & loves opera (+ pianist?, + linguist?) Box No 2240

SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS

GENTLEMEN

GOODLOOKING, slim, humorous, educated, music loving professional man 36, enjoys cooking, singing, hill walking, concerts. WLTM attractive educated lady 28-38 to enjoy life. W. Yorks. Photo appreciated. Box 2252 ☎

GUESS what! Did this back in '95. Met this great woman, but never mind. Engineer, 41, of non-repellent appearance seeks new squeeze, (female) of similar age, wave length and SOH. M6, jct 13. Party animals move on. Reply to Box No 2200

HAPPY, intelligent, articulate prof chap is searching for a positive prof female, firstly for friendship, ideally for more. I'm London based, 30, 5'8", N/S, caring, solvent, mischievous & love eating out, country walks, antiques, tennis but not football & classic cars. You'll be nearish (in age & outlook) honest & happy to be indulged. Letter & photo to Box No. 2243 ☎

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REFLECTIVE, contemplative yet humorous man, 5'10", fair. Midlands based. Avid traveller, fascinated with clocks, languages & enjoys cooking, etc. Offers caring, loving relationship to smart 50's lady. Suggest exchange photos/tel no. as first step. Reply to Box No 2232

SERIOUSLY Tall, slim woman with style, intelligence & humour 30's, 40's sought by prof man 45, tall, dark hair, kind, sincere, amusing, charismatic, N/S; likes: travel, Beethoven, claret & cooking. London/Surrey. Long letter & photo appreciated. Box 2238

ST ALBANS Welwyn, Luton. Happy New Year - Happy New Life! Join Elite Introductions by calling Susanne; 01582 831831

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GENTLEMEN

SUCCESSFUL, sincere, spiritual sensitive, London based company director (mid 40's) who has almost everything he needs WLTM attractive sensuous, fun loving woman to share his joy of restaurants, music & travel Photo essential. Box 2227

SURREY/Hants gentleman, own business, widowed, 50 but looks younger, enjoys champ. gardening, walking. WLTM intelligent compatible lady any nationality, 25-45 for long term relationship. Box 2230

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GOOD cook & honest Chap 40 single, in back of beyond seeks (city based) lady for cosy contrasting cultural Christmas conversations & Tuscan hols Please state preferred food wine, etc. to Box No 2056

HAMPSHIRE SE, Single guy, 40s, laid back with interesting business, seeks very attractive, smart prof single/widowed lady 25-35ish for 1997 onwards. Photo please. Box No 2163

MIDDLE EAST Based - English Professional Businessman. Divorced - aged mid 50's young at heart - stylish nice guy. Fed up with single life and seeks a firm relationship with right partner subject to mutual interest. She needs to be a sincere but energetic flexible and intelligent personality -attractive in 30's to 40's your decision. I enjoy a senior position in Global Co. Hold a fairly hectic social life but enjoy sports & nights at home. As it comes I live in a reasonably liberal country attractive & pleasant people. Prepared to look and travel to meet right lady, any nationality & poss. visit here to check the goods. Interested you should be. Then reply with photo to Box No 2083

MUSLIM, Pakistan origin, professional engineer, divorced (1 son) WLTM girl 27-34 years, tall, any nationality. South Coast. Photo plse to Box 2181

UNCONVENTIONAL man, attractive, tall, athletic build. Successful, unpretentious professional seeks sincere, interesting, "have a go" woman (25-33) who can enjoy herself. Surrey/ London based. Photo please. Reply to Box No 2145

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هكذا من الأصل

When the service comes to your doorstep

Page 7

THE TIMES

CAR 97

A speedy antidote for the holiday hangover

Page 10

SATURDAY JANUARY 4 1997

Now is the winter of our insurance claims . . . **Tony Dawe** reports on a perfect client and the hazards of cold weather

A driver who is definitely worth the risk

Joyce Daniel is just the woman to bring a new year smile to the faces of insurance company chiefs as they await a barrage of claims following cold weather crashes.

She drives a popular Ford model, which means that new parts are cheap; her 950cc Fiesta is seven years old; so replacing it would be relatively inexpensive. She lives in a village not far from Swansea, parking the car in a garage lit by a security light behind her home, and drives barely 6,000 miles a year, mainly on local roads.

In short, Mrs Daniel is the perfect motor insurance risk. Companies would fight to cover her; indeed she changed firms eight months ago because she was offered a better deal. Her fully comprehensive premium is now just £81.65.

With insurance costs expected to rise this year and January being the month when people look to save money after Christmas overindulgence, many motorists will be wanting to know Mrs Daniel's secret.

The main reason she pays so little is, of course, that she is a safe driver. She earns a 62.6 per cent discount on the basic comprehensive premium of £721.92 for an E registration Fiesta Popular because she has gone seven years without making a claim.

"Some people might accuse me of being too cautious, but I have been lucky," she says. "I always take care when coming out of junctions and am rather reluctant to overtake. I make sure I can see a long way ahead before doing so and check that I have cleared the other vehicles completely before pulling in again.

"I have had a couple of scrapes over the years. I hit a student's car outside the school where I work part-time, but we settled that privately on a knock-for-knock basis. On another occasion, I remember a lamp-post happened to be in the way when I was reversing out of my drive."

The modest car she drives also attracts Mrs Daniel to insurance companies. Indeed, she has never nurtured ambitions to drive anything grand. "The first car of my own in the late 1970s was a little yellow Fiat 500," she recalls. "It was very economical, used two-star petrol but was not worth a lot so I only insured it third party."

She took out a comprehensive premium when she inherited a 1000cc Ford Escort, and maintained her excellent driving record when she moved on to a Morris Marina and then the Fiesta, which was a silver wedding present from her husband, Brian.

Her age, 55, earns a further discount as more and more insurance companies offer savings to the statistically safer drivers over 50. Even her idea of a favourite outing would qualify when insurers, although they offer no extra discount for it. Instead of driving somewhere on a sunny day, she prefers to cycle down to The Mumbles on the Gower Peninsula.

Although she pays less in insurance than almost every motorist in Britain, Mrs Daniel, like most drivers, is always on the lookout for a better deal. So when she saw a reader offer in the *Sun* last year guaranteeing a £10 saving on motor insurance or £10 back, she followed it up.

"Every year when the insurance policy is coming up for renewal, I put out feelers to see if any other company is cheaper and this time I managed to save £19 with Zenith," she says.

Mrs Daniel was identified for *Car 97* as the perfect risk by PremiumSearch, the Northampton-based brokers who found her the better deal. "Based on our experience, I started by looking for a lady of a certain age and then for one who drove a small car of modest value," says Karen Noble of PremiumSearch.

Her company's idea of the perfect risk does differ slightly from other insurers. The latest quarterly survey from Velo Insurance Services, based on 25,000 claims, suggests that a Fiat owner living in Suffolk, who mainly drives on motorways and uses well-lit, multi-storey car parks, is the ideal driver.

Velo justifies this finding with figures which show that Fiats were the cheapest cars to repair — with an average accident repair bill of £360 — and that motorways are Britain's safest roads.

The company also reported that only 1.4 per cent of car break-ins occurred to vehicles left in multi-storey parks and that Suffolk was by far the cheapest place to have an accident, with an average cost of £358 for each claim. The county was also bottom of Royal Insurance's road accident league table, with only three accidents a year for every thousand people in the county.

Strangely, West Glamorgan, where Mrs Daniel lives, has repair costs higher than the average for England and Wales, which makes her insurance deal even more remarkable.

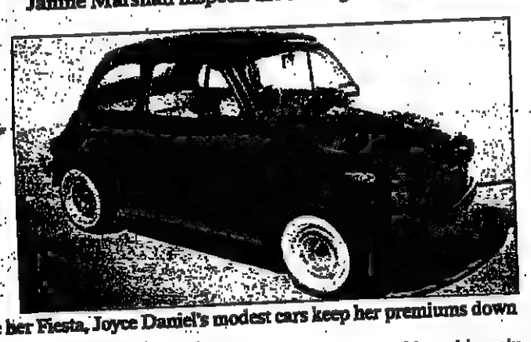
Her premium is also only a quarter of the average figure for a good risk quoted by the Association of British Insurers. The association bases its figures on the comprehensive premiums charged by its members for a 1300cc family saloon car garaged in the Home Counties or a small provincial city and driven by a mature motorist.

The latest figure is £369, which is double the average premium ten years ago but still £64 below the peak that was reached in 1993 after claims resulting from crime and bad weather had reached record levels.

With premiums expected to rise again, more and more motorists will aspire to match Mrs Daniel's profile, but for many it will mean changing to a smaller car and moving to a less-accident prone area.

NEWS TEAM

Janine Marshall inspects the damage: "After the second crash, I was sitting in the kitchen telling my mum that these things happen in threes"



Starting with a Fiat 500, right, then moving to an Escort before her Fiesta, Joyce Daniel's modest cars keep her premiums down

JOYCE DANIEL PAYS

Basic premium	£721.92
Silver policy discount*	5 per cent
Age discount	40 per cent
Class of use discount (leisure use only)	7.5 percent
Age of vehicle discount	24 per cent
Restricted driving discount	22.5 per cent
No claim discount	62.6 per cent
Discount for garaged car	5 per cent
Premium	£79.66
Insurance Premium Tax	£1.99
Total Premium	£81.65

Each discount is taken off the previous amount.

** Silver policy discount is for agreeing to a limit on claims for such items as a broken windscreen or stolen car radio.*

GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

The best risks . . .

- Male drivers in their 40s. They have the lowest number of accidents per miles driven.
- Motorists in Suffolk or Tyne & Wear, where the lowest number of accidents per thousand of the population occur.
- Drivers of Fiats, Range Rovers, Peugeots and Fords. These cars have the lowest average accident repair costs.
- Motorists who fit alarms and/or immobilisers
- Those who drive most frequently on local streets, where the average cost of accidents is the lowest.

. . . and the worst

- Drivers under 18. They have the highest number of accidents per miles driven.
- Motorists living in Greater London or Surrey, which are top of the road accident league.
- Drivers of Mazdas, Saabs and Toyotas, which have the highest average accident repair costs.
- Those who regularly leave their cars outside their homes, where 39 per cent of thefts occur.
- Those who drive most frequently on B roads, where the average cost of accidents is by far the highest at £1,821 a time.

Three strikes and Janine's Fiesta is out

The string of disasters that befell Janine Marshall and her Ford Fiesta this week — and ones like them — spell bad news for all motorists. Miss Marshall's car was hit three times within an hour without moving on a freezing morning as drivers skidded on black ice outside her home.

The Siberian weather conditions which have swept Britain have caused innumerable similar accidents and insurance companies are bracing themselves for a deluge of claims, which are likely to lead to higher premiums later in the year.

Like many thousands of motorists, Miss Marshall is spending this weekend filling out insurance claim forms. She should, at least, find them easier to understand than most because she is an insurance underwriter.

Her misfortune began when she was woken with the news that a car had skidded on the ice into her Fiesta. As she telephoned for a claim form, she heard a second bang. A Mitsubishi had rammed the Fiesta, shunting it into her driveway.

The distressed woman who had been at the wheel and her two children were driven away by a friend, leaving their car behind the Fiesta. Then, proving that troubles like insurance forms, can come in triplicate, a Vauxhall Omega smashed into both vehicles.

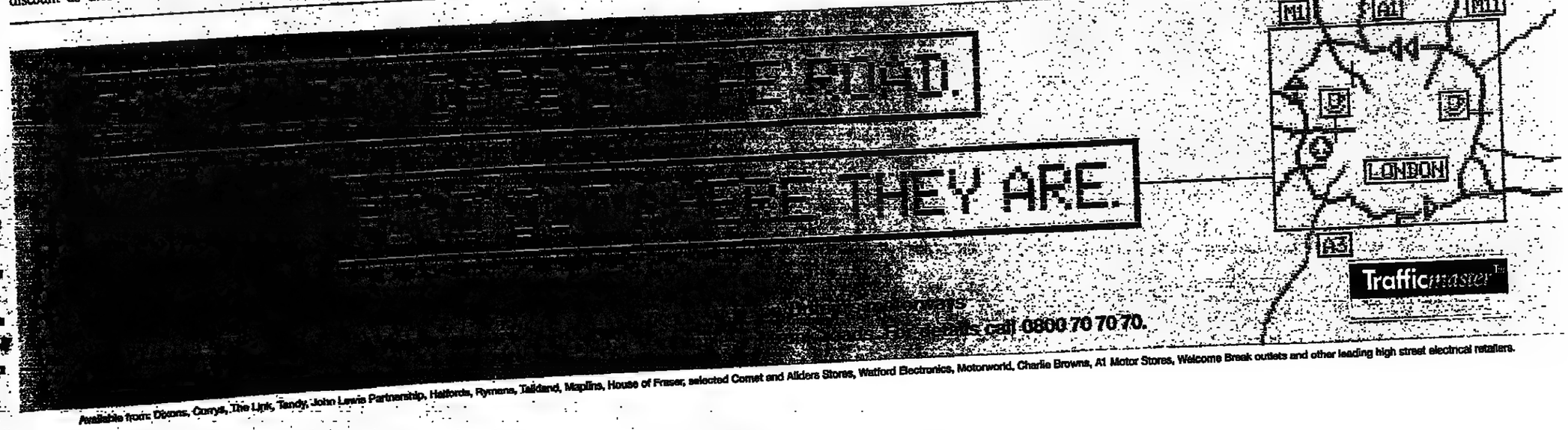
"After the second crash, I was sitting in the kitchen telling my mum that these things happen in threes when we heard the next bang," said Miss Marshall of Stockport, Greater Manchester. "I couldn't believe it."

Gary Ashworth, statistician at PremiumSearch, insurance brokers, says that accidents increase by about 30 per cent in icy weather, with motorists skidding off the road and into posts and other vehicles.

"A long cold snap will add to the pressure on premiums," says Suzanne Moore of the Association of British Insurers. "The vast majority of claims are for knocks and bumps and these increase when the roads are slippery."

Premiums have dropped slightly in recent years as the number of claims has fallen because of greater efforts to reduce car crime and less severe weather conditions. Crime is on the increase again, however, and some analysts have been forecasting a significant increase in motor premiums this year.

DRIVING ON SNOW AND ICE: PAGE 3



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They appear to have abandoned all contact with other road users, preferring to behave as if the highway was provided for them on an exclusive basis

Lady drivers of an uncertain age

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

Peter Barnard

The last time I raised the delicate matter of women drivers, defending them on that occasion against chauvinist prejudices, several men wrote to complain that I had clearly gone soft in the head and that they liked me better when I displayed blind prejudice. So this week I shall revert to type and have a go at women drivers.

Not all of them: even blind prejudice needs mitigating. Taken as a statistical collective, the insurance companies say that women are safer drivers than men. They are certainly safer to be around. They are unlikely to set about your head with a starting handle, for instance.

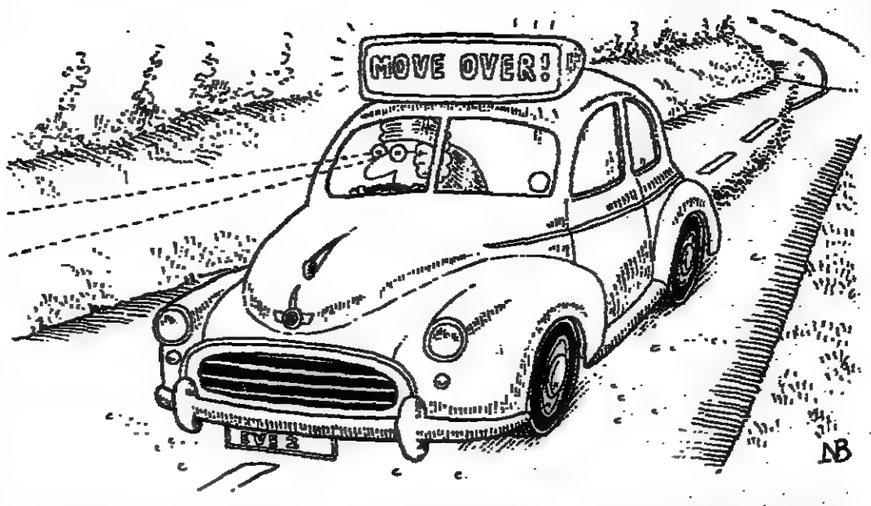
Again taken statistically, the safest of all women drivers are elderly ones. The image of the little old lady in her Morris Minor drifting along the highways and byways without causing offence to anyone is a strong one. And, in my view, somewhat misleading.

The reason elderly women do not get involved in many accidents is that the rest of us are piling into each other trying to avoid them.

Elderly women drivers are in a world of their own on the roads. They appear to have abandoned all contact with other road users, preferring to behave as if the British highway was provided for them on an exclusive basis.

This is not much more than a trifling irritant on narrow country roads. Here, oncoming males are expected to reverse for miles so that the old dear does not have to set a spruce tyre upon a verge or, heaven forbid, search for reverse gear. She stares that stony stare through the windscreen and we know what it means: the cricked neck shall be ours, not hers.

One of the strangest manifestations of elderly woman syndrome is to do with indicators. No matter how new the car, its indicators stop working once the woman who owns it reaches the age of 60.



Perhaps the car's management system has decided to save power on indicators in order to maintain the glow from headlights, fog lights and even interior lights, which never seem to switch themselves off.

But of all the environments in which elderly women cause alarm, the motorway is the prime example. These drivers are not even part of the main flow before early warning signals are flashing, as I discovered on the M4 this week. I was approaching down a slip road with only light traffic on the motorway itself when a car chugging alone in the first lane simply refused to do what almost every other category of driver would have done: move over to let me in. Needless to say, the driver was a woman aged about 65. Within 100 yards of forcing me almost to a halt on the slip road, she pulled out to pass a lorry without indicating.

I think I know what is going on here. Much as the dreaded Internet defies comprehension by a generation of older people, modern traffic flows are a mystery to many of them, especially women. Therefore they sally forth wearing blinkers: all of their attention is focused on getting from A to B. Far from fiddling about in handbags or applying mascara at the wheel, as the standard image suggests, elderly women drivers are in fact concentrating fit to make Damon Hill envious.

They are, in other words, the safest drivers on the road. No wonder the insurance companies love them. They are completely selfish, in the truest sense, and if the rest of us let their selfishness affect us then we have only ourselves to blame. The elderly woman driver is at once a perfect nuisance and a perfect example of survival in the hurly-burly of modern driving.

So I salute them ... as soon as they are safely in my rear view mirror. And it is a polite salute, for you cannot but admire their gall.

● Entries for our competition to give the Ford Ka a nickname less daft than the real one have been pouring in, but keep them coming. The closing date is January 13 and the winner gets a magnum of champagne. Postcards to: Name That Ka, Car 97, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

Buying cheap can cost you

Eve-Ann Prentice looks at the figures that may surprise car fleet operators

CHEAPEST AND DEAREST

	Retail price £	Mnthly cost £	Cost per mile
Fiat Cinquecento 900 S 3-dr hbk	6,132	148	21.8p
Nissan Micra 1.0l Shape 3-dr hbk	7,660	161	23.8p
Rover 100 1.1l Knightsbridge 3-dr hbk	7,048	165	24.0p
Mercedes S 600 limo 4-dr saloon	102,444	1,709	220.9p
Mercedes CL 500 2-dr coupé	81,344	1,254	165.9p
BMW 4.4i 740i L 4-dr saloon	57,945	1,163	147.8p

The price tag on a new company car can be deceptive, according to the latest guide to total running costs of hundreds of vehicles ranging from the humble to the extravagantly show-off.

Curmudgeonly or merely cost-conscious firms which think they are saving money by opting for the cheapest purchase price when choosing cars for their employees may be sadly disappointed.

For the cheapest model in a given category is sometimes more expensive in the longer term than a rival when the hidden costs of motoring are taken into consideration.

The Company Car Cost Calculator provides a fascinating insight into operating costs. Compiled for the past 12 years by Leasecontracts, the company that provides many fleets, it shows that the cheapest car to run in Britain is the Fiat Cinquecento, while the most expensive is the Mercedes-Benz S 600. The Fiat costs 21.8p per mile to run and the Mercedes a whopping 220.9p a mile.

Geoff Becque, who compiles the guide, says: "The bottom line is that if you look at total operating costs, you can often enjoy a better specification, higher performance vehicle and better motoring than if you simply based your choice on purchase prices."

The costs have been calculated on the basis of a range of factors including depreciation, fuel costs, vehicle licence, funding, maintenance, temporary replacement vehicles, AA Relay Plus membership and fleet administration. Costs in the Calculator are also based on a three-year life and the driver travelling 12,000 miles a year.

Startling comparisons can be found throughout the guide, which takes all the hard work out of price-checking. The Volkswagen Polo 1.4iL 5-door hatchback, for instance, costs £9,165 — £1,500 more than the Hyundai Accent 1.3i 3-door Coupe — yet costs £193 a month, £5 a month less than running the Hyundai.

"The Polo therefore costs the user, or his company, less to run over three years, most particularly because it should sell for a much better price at the end of its contract period," says Becque.

At the luxury end of the market, the Mercedes Benz E 320 Cabriolet two-door soft top costs £52,075, but at 105.9p per mile is cheaper to run than the 106.5p per mile cost of a car which is £11,000 cheaper to buy, the Range Rover 4.0i SE station wagon four-door.

The comparisons become more dramatic as the price of the vehicles increase: the Seat Alhambra 2.0i SE 5-seat, five-door people mover is available for the same monthly cost of £272 as the Daihatsu Sportrak 1.6i Xi-SE three-door estate — yet costs over £4,400 more than the Daihatsu.

Best fuel consumption comes from the Peugeot 205 1.8 D Level 1 three-door hatchback diesel at 58mpg, while the Calculator's gas guzzler awards go to the Toyota Land Cruiser Colorado 3.4i VX four-door eastate at 16.1mpg, and the Range Rover 4.6i HSE station wagon four-door estate at 18mpg.

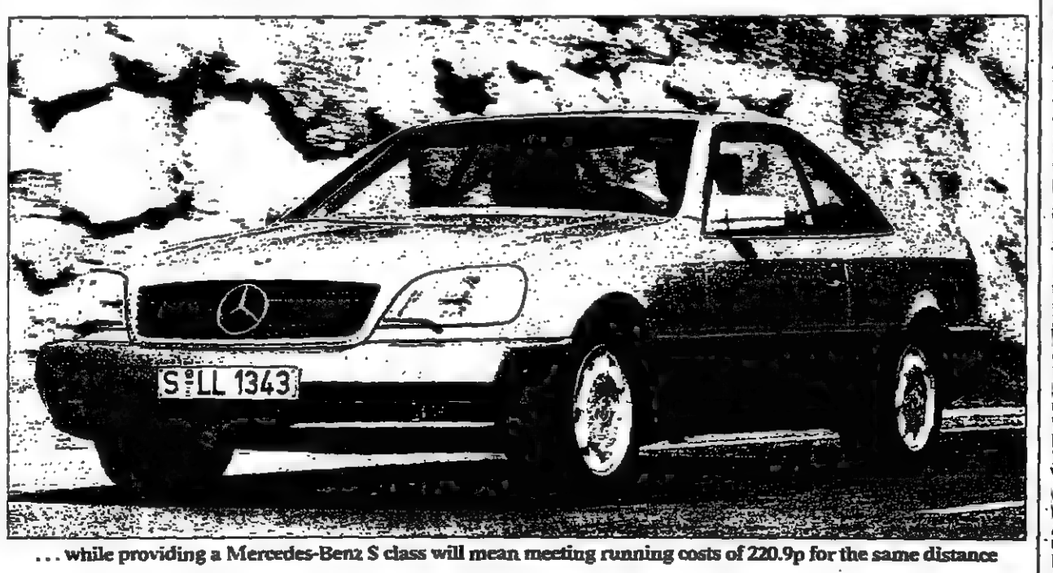
Ford's new Ka 1.3i three-door hatchback makes an impressive debut in the guide with total running costs of £190 a month (26.7p per mile), as does the new fleet contender, the Chrysler Neon 2.0i LE four-door saloon at £289 a month (39.6p per mile).

For the first time, the Calculator shows the net monthly cost in 1997/8 of benefit in kind taxation to standard as well as higher rate tax-payers. This is based on company car drivers who have an average business mileage of between 2,501 and 17,999 miles a year and pay for full private use.

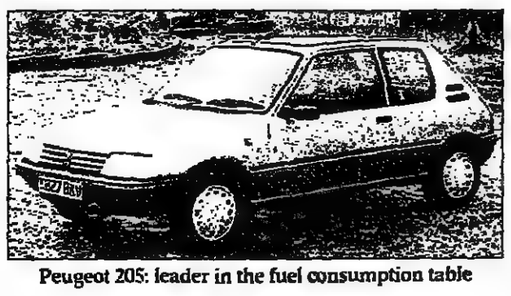
A look at 1987's Calculator shows the dramatic change in motoring costs in the past 10 years. Petrol was £1.52 a gallon net of VAT in 1987, benefit in kind tax was based on engine size and you could buy a Mini for £3,725. The cheapest car to run back at the height of the Thatcher years was the Austin Mini City E two-door at £131 a month (17.4p per mile), on which the monthly benefit in kind tax was £12.69.

The 1997 Company Car Cost Calculator is available free to fleet managers and executives with company car responsibilities from Leasecontracts, Lauriston House, Pitchill, Evesham WR11 5SN, tel 01386 870884, fax 01386 870898.

Good news for the company accountants: at 21.8p a mile, the Fiat Cinquecento is cheapest car to run in Britain ...



... while providing a Mercedes-Benz S class will mean meeting running costs of 220.9p for the same distance



Peugeot 205: leader in the fuel consumption table

New gear resolutions

More drivers are planning to buy

After several years in which sales have shown little movement from a level of around two million, Britain's motor industry might gather some New Year cheer from the latest survey about car buyers' intentions, *writes Alan Copps*.

January is the second best month for sales after the August rush caused by the annual registration change, which is expected to disappear this year.

But January 1997 could see a rush of motorists visiting showrooms, according to the quarterly Car Confidence Index produced by Autoglass, the windscreen specialists. It concludes that confidence about car buying remains at a three-year high, a level first reached during last year's August rush when the P-plate arrived.

More than one third of the 651 drivers questioned for the survey in December said they intended to change their cars in 1997, an 8 per cent increase over January 1996 when 28 per cent of those questioned had plans to replace their cars.

Of those who plan a change in 1997, 33 per cent said they were intending to buy a new car. The average price of a new car is expected to be £10,856, an increase of £500 over last year, and 13 per cent of those in the new car market said they intended to go for a luxury model, costing more than £18,000. The luxury sector is already leading the way in a sales revival.

Andy Edyvean, marketing manager for Autoglass, said: "This is excellent New Year cheer for the car market. It's also good new for Autoglass because many drivers will be getting their windscreens fixed before trading their cars in."

● LONDON
A406 Upper Edmonton. Major roadworks on Angel Road (North Circular Road) over the Lea Valley Viaduct to add lanes, flyovers and tunnels.
A3 Kingston. Northbound lane closure on the Kingston Bypass between Shannon Corner (A298) and Coombe Lane junction (A238) for work on Carters Bridge.
A3212 Westminster. Bridge Street and Victoria Embankment closed 9pm-6am at weekends in places between Parliament Square and Westminster Bridge.
A3220 Earl's Court. Gas main work 8am to 4pm on Warwick Road at junction with Philbeach Gardens.

● SOUTH-EAST
A4 Reading, Berkshire. Restrictions and lane closures for widening work between the Hogarth Roundabout and Burghfield Road.
A330 Ascot, Berkshire. Temporary lights for road widening and new roundabout.
A27 Brighton. Overnight (10pm-6am) maintenance work on the Brighton bypass between Hangleton Junction and Ditchling Road Bridge.
A23 Patcham, East Sussex. Lane closed on the slip roads, with various other local restrictions in place.
M25 Surrey. Restrictions and lane closures both ways between Godstone and the A3 as major widening work continues along the 19-mile stretch.
A3 Surrey. Hogs Back (A31), long-term roadworks at Stag Hill flyover. Various restrictions in place.

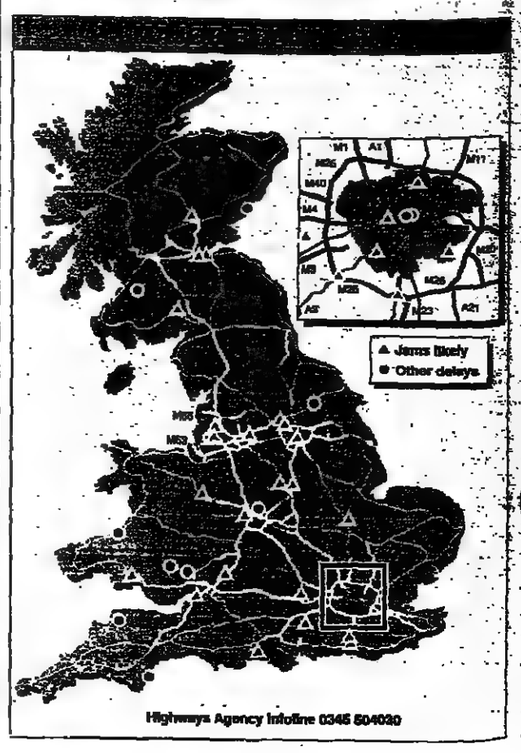
● SOUTH-WEST
A3022 Brixham, Devon. Water main work under way between Cudhill Road and Town Hall.
M5 Gloucestershire. Major roadworks with only one lane open at roundabout junction with A419.
M5 Gloucestershire. Contraflow across Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph limit.
Swindon, Wiltshire. Construction work on Fleming Way with restrictions between the Magic Roundabout and Whalebridge.

● MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA
A1 Alconbury Hills, Cambridgeshire. Down to one lane northbound at the A14.
A38 Derby southern bypass. Roadworks for construction of A564.
A6 Lockington, Leicestershire. Contraflow from just north of M1 J24 to Sawley Island, with no right turn into Dorrington Lane.
A464 Haughton, Shropshire. Temporary lights for water works between Upton Magna and Asterley.
A41, Wolverhampton, West Midlands. Temporary lights on Bilston Road at canal bridge.
A454 Aldridge, West Midlands. Temporary lights on Walsall Road between Tyning Lane and Quicksand Lane.

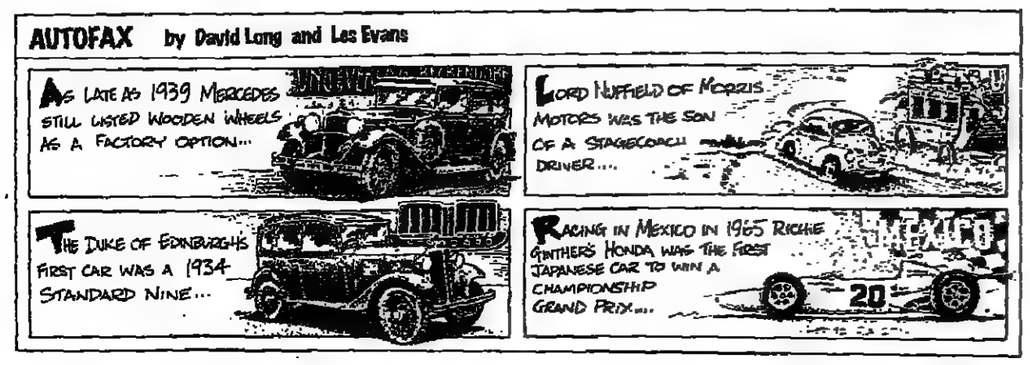
● NORTH
A62 Chadderton, Greater Manchester. M66 construction work on Oldham Road at junction with Hollinwood Avenue.
A570 Bickerstaffe, Lancashire. Bridge works at Rainford Road junction with M58. Single lane traffic in both directions.
A59 Much Hoole, Lancashire. Resurfacing work on Liverpool Road causing major hold-ups heading to and from Preston.
York Inner Ring Road. Diversions for outbound traffic on Peasholme Green.
A19 Bentley, South Yorkshire. Roadworks at the Bentley Road flood arches.
A636 Wakefield, West Yorkshire. Diversion for roadworks on Denby Dale Road near Ings Road junction.
M1 West Yorkshire. Major roadworks continue around the Leeds junction with lane and speed restrictions. Delays on M1, M621 and Dewsbury Road.

● WALES
A487 Aberaeron, Ceredigion. Upper Aberaeron Bridge on South Road closed for reconstruction work. Diversions via Panteg Road and the A487.
A470 north of Cefn Coed, Merthyr Tydfil. Temporary lights on Brecon road for major works. 40mph on A465 at Cefn Coed with temp lights on Aberdare Road.
M4 Swansea. Carriageway reduced to one lane in both directions for roadworks between Swansea and Llanelli.
A472 Pontypool, Torfaen. Contraflow between Pontymoile and Heron roundabout.

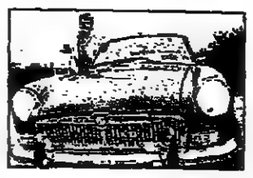
● SCOTLAND
M8 Edinburgh. Junction 2 Newbridge Spur (M9). Major roadworks, with lane closures on the roundabout.
A8 Princes Street, Edinburgh. Closed eastbound to motor vehicles. Diversions via South Charlotte Street, Queen Street and York Place.
A937 Montrose, Angus. Roadworks at Hillside.
A701 Dumfries and Galloway. Roadworks between Parkgate and Beattock.
A9 Greenloaning, Perth & Kinross. Contraflow four miles east of Dunkeld.
A76 Lochill, East Ayrshire. Temporary lights north to New Cumnock.



AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans



Moral: listen to Dr Dashboard



NOW entering his third year of dispensing wisdom on all matters motoring, Dr Dashboard always aims to please. But in a Christmas card from one reader he has received thanks for helping her win the MGB GTV8 featured in *Car* 96 on December 21.

The raffle for the restored car held by British Motor Heritage and Motorcare Services raised £25,000 for charity. It was won by Jean Fernandiz of Lyme Regis, Dorset. In a delighted note she says: "It is all because I read your column ... I felt it such a good idea to support the Marie Curie Cancer Fund but never dreaming in a thousand years that the car could be mine. You inspired me."

هكذا من الأصل

As Britain skids into wintry chaos, **Ian Morton** takes part in a driving test where it gets seriously cold

The Volvo V70 on ice: there are probably more off-roaders in Chelsea than the whole of Sweden, where drivers take pride in beating the blizzard with two driven wheels, and four-wheel-drive is only for wimps, woodsmen, and rescue services

A chilly circuit of Lapps on a foot of ice

They wore bulging blue anoraks and fur hats and fur boots and big smiles. As well they might. They were our Swedish hosts, experts to a man on how to speed safely over the slippery stuff, and they were about to witness an amusing exhibition. British drivers on ice.

This was Volvo's annual winter test whirl on a frozen lake, about as far north as you can get without falling into the Barents Sea. Russia a few miles away, a herd of reindeer in the birch trees nearby, and a pretty Lapp lady in trad gear offering mini-Santa sleigh rides. Picturesque, when you can see it, for the area has only three hours of semi-daylight at this time of year.

And there is cold, damned cold, and this lake place. Overnight temperatures had descended to minus 26 Centigrade, someone was saying, and we were not to worry — ice creaks when you walk on it, even when it is thick enough. They had drilled through to make sure there was more than the foot or so of thickness required. This was a comfort.

A tractor-snowplough had pushed aside a two-foot layer of snow to form a 1,000-yard circuit like Thruxton only worse, all beckoning straights and subtle snakey sections and tightening curves. And naked grey-black ice instead of tarmac, and run-offs into snow instead of grass. Get your driven wheels into soft snow and you will need to be towed out, they said. A lot did.

If there are few conspicuously scarred or bashed vehicles in Scandinavia, and if the populace produces prime rally drivers, here is a reason. They do not suffer winter driving, they revel in it. They train on ice and snow, and pass tests on ice and snow. Above all, they learn not to fear it.

You might suppose that four-wheel-drive would be a necessity rather than a luxury in a Scandinavian winter, but there are probably more off-roaders in Chelsea than the whole of Sweden, where drivers take pride in beating the blizzard with two driven wheels, and four-wheel-drive is only for wimps, woodsmen and rescue services.

Although it has been producing four- and even six-wheel-drive army vehicles for years, Volvo has offered only one model with all-round power (the 850 AWD, now being replaced by the V70 AWD), and Saab has yet to make a showing. Yet both manufacturers have become turbo specialists.

More available power rather than less on slippery surfaces? It works when used properly, and becomes stunningly effective in conjunction with winter tyres with metal studs, the sort of kit you never see in Britain, another reason why winter will always impose chaos upon us.

Is there a more satisfying process than charging the apex of a long flat curve on an ice track in a deliberate state of under-steer, the whole car weaving towards apparent disaster, the front tyres free-spinning and singing under gross turbo power, the balance held in the tips of the fingers as they feel and control the pulse of the steering? And then, with one gentle quarter-turn of the wheel, the tyres take a clean bite into the surface and the car straightens and heaves forward even more eagerly?

Or perhaps that progression of events when a corner tightens, the car's speed is patently too great, the wheel goes limp, and the front end is heading for the soft snow and the disgrace of rescue — and then you set the steering and haul on the handbrake for a moment, the car turns magically on its own axis, the front tyres grip, and off you hare again as some bloke behind explodes into the drift you have just avoided?

By means of such activity, Scandinavians discover in perfect safety how to interpret what their cars are telling them, how to anticipate, how to react, and, even more importantly, avoid over-reaction. They experience just what their cars will and will not do in extreme circumstances.

And as they enjoy this hectic high-speed learning process, they also absorb the essential virtues — applicable on public roads all the year round, but especially important on dicey surfaces — of smooth acceleration and gear work, minimal braking or none at all, gentle wheel movement, constant observation, planned manoeuvres, letting quicker drivers through, and giving everyone plenty of space. Virtues that we in Britain all too often recall the hard and expensive way.

Sometimes it seems that one flash of the weather girl's white winter symbols south of Scotland and the Pennines, any hint that Kent and the Cotswolds are in the path of the cold front, and car commuters are giving themselves an extra half hour to get stuck, weekend motoring trips to see Gran are postponed, and bodywork repair specialists everywhere are booking Barbados for next summer.

In these matters, we might conclude that our winters are generally too short and lenient to allow us to learn very much, but are none the less long and severe enough to remind us of what an inadequate lot we are.

In association with Volvo, *Car 97* offers a reader the chance to win one week's use of a S70 saloon as featured in the company's ice-driving course. Just answer these questions:

1 How many engines are offered in the new Volvo S70 and V70 range?
2 What is the biggest single cause of car failure in cold weather?
3 For every £1 spent on car maintenance, how much is saved in the cost of accidents, delays, and lost production?
4 How many separate items are there on the Volvo S70 and V70 options list?
5 What is the minimum ice thickness Volvo requires for driving on a frozen lake?

Write your answers on a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope, and send it to Ice Advice, Car 97, *The Times*, 1, Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Closing date for entries is January 14, 1997. Usual competition rules apply. The first correct answer drawn at random will win.

Volvo S70 saloon: the overwhelming sensation remains a feeling of secure wellbeing

Why do we make the discontent of our winters worse?

How drivers catch a cold

WILL the British ever come to terms with even a sprinkling of snow? It is easy to see why we are so often caught out; we make few or no preparations for cold-weather driving.

According to the RAC, every £1 spent on winter maintenance saves £9 in terms of reduced accidents, traffic delays, and lost production. Yet almost half the 2.1 million breakdowns which the RAC dealt with last winter could have been avoided.

Biggest let-down is the duff battery. Too many motorists expect the modern powerpack to live forever. But if an ageing or ailing battery is going to expire, it will probably do so on the coldest day of the year. Even new cars are not immune: the growth of in-car electronic equipment means an increase in battery drain.

Other electrics, notably distributors and alternators, are a major problem too, and damaged tyres have a habit of slumping in the snow — wheel-changing comes high up the rescue list during the very worst weather. Worn treads will be at their least effective on slippery roads, and are never worth the risk.

Cold conditions should never be tackled with low oil and screen-wash levels, and wash bottles need a higher proportion of additive. Smeary wiper blades should be replaced. Lamps must be checked for dead bulbs and wiped clean before any trip. De-icer for screen and locks and damp-start spray could prove a boon. An old handbrush and a properly designed plastic scraper are essential if you want to avoid using your credit card to clear the screen.

A serious winter journey demands even more preparation. Many a motorist has been grateful for jump leads, tow rope, snow chains, old sacks or matting, small shovel, blankets, powerful torch, first-aid kit, a stock of energy-rich snacks such as biscuits and chocolate, and a supply of morale-raising tapes.

Remember, too, the tank should be kept full — cars use more fuel in winter — and should the worst happen, a running engine may provide the most welcome warmth you ever experienced.

The range of 1,800 differences

Volvo used the winter test session to show off its latest 13-model range — the heavily revised 850, now renamed the S70 saloon and V70 estate.

However, Volvo-watchers should be advised that though the overall shape is similar — 850 body shell and doors survive — some 1,800 changes have been made, and frontal and interior treatments follow the recently revealed C70 coupé.

Looking to the range to help boost overall annual sales by a quarter to 500,000 by the end of the decade, Volvo has joined the middle-executive mainstream with a sloping V-shaped bonnet which merges with the traditional Volvo grille, slimmer headlamps, modish thick-section bumpers, flared front wings, and more windscreen rake. Inside the fascia has softer lines and finishes and handier switchgear (Audi was the benchmark here).

More wood-insert choices seek a wider up-market impact, and a new optional steering wheel combines wood rim and leather, the only doubtful touch. Volvo is particularly proud of its new door panel design, and safety improvements include massive new B-pillar treatment and a four-section steering column.

Seven engines include a more powerful 2.5-litre, 20-valve with light-pressure turbo which produces maximum torque at only 1,800rpm. Prices range from £18,400 for the S70, with a 2.0-litre 10-valve engine to £27,900 for the V70 with sophisticated triple-differential AWD (All-Wheel-Drive), but every car will be built to customer order, and with Sports, Luxury, and CD option packs and a separate 50-item options list from £20 cupholders to £2,000 electronic climate control, few 70-series cars are likely to emerge to standard spec.

First impressions are of conspicuously rigid construction, a quiet and refined ride even in rutted conditions, ample power delivered with huge self-assurance, and a classy and spacious interior. The Swedish carmaker has really proved in recent years that safety sells and although Volvo has gone to great lengths to add performance to its virtues, the overwhelming sensation remains a feeling of secure wellbeing in hostile conditions.

DR DASHBOARD'S COLD COMFORT

- Above all, ask yourself: is this journey really necessary? If you're not convinced, don't go out.
- If your battery is the old type that needs topping up, check levels now. Keep all terminals clean, tight and covered in waterproof jelly. If in the slightest doubt, replace it.
- Check the cooling system, and add anti-freeze if necessary.
- Make sure that tyre treads are not worn and that tyres are properly inflated.
- Check oil and water levels. Make sure that fan belts are tight and that spark plugs are properly adjusted, their leads are firmly in place and free from dirt or cracks.
- Lubricate door locks, check the demister is working properly and that the number plate is clean.
- Make sure all lights are working and all lenses are clean.
- Fill screen wash bottles and use an additive to prevent freezing. Check the adjustment of screen washers and wipers, not forgetting the rear wiper if fitted. Replace worn wiper blades.
- Ensure the fuel tank is full. Cold weather increases fuel consumption and journeys take longer than expected.
- Make sure your radio is working properly. Weather forecasts, police warnings and advice from the motoring organisations can be invaluable.
- For regular use equip your car with de-icer, damp-start spray, a plastic scraper, torch and a dry cloth or chamois leather for drying inside windows.
- In really severe weather or for long journeys take an emergency kit: jump leads, tow rope, a shovel, some old sacks or matting to give tyres extra grip on ice, warm waterproof clothes, blanket, flask of warm drink, food (biscuits or chocolate bar), lock de-icer and chains to go on your tyres.
- If things look really bad, take a mobile phone or let someone else know your proposed route and your estimated time of arrival.

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On the ultimate deserted road

Eve-Ann Prentice talks to two drivers preparing for 19 days of rallying hell

For the next 16 days, Keith Parker and Dick Partridge will go to extremes. In temperatures ranging from below freezing to more than 130 deg F, the Suffolk adventurers will race for up to 800 kilometres a day in some of the most inhospitable terrain on Earth.

The pair, from Ipswich, are the only Britons taking part in the 11,000-kilometre Dakar rally in northern Africa, one of the most gruelling and dangerous events in the world's motoring calendar. Originally the Paris-Dakar rally, the event now starts and ends in the Senegal capital, although the entrants only learn the exact route as they go along.

After several deaths in the rally's 19-year history, the event is being diverted well away from minefields and political troublespots this year. There have also been changes in the technical regulations, aimed at reducing the importance of big budgets and high-performance vehicles.

Which is all good news for Partridge, 40, who is making his fifth attempt in the rally. He has never got beyond the halfway stage before.

He and Parker, who is making his second appearance as Partridge's navigator in the event, have spent the past year preparing an Isuzu Trooper to cope with shifting sands and stinging winds in the wastes of the Sahara. They have little or no back-up and must undertake all the maintenance work themselves.

"What I really want to do is finish," says the indefatigable Partridge, who was stranded for three days in the Tenere desert, hundreds of miles from civilisation, on his second Dakar attempt. "We have spent about £20,000 buying and preparing the vehicle, we have no one to help us when we are out there."

Although Partridge and Parker face a struggle against the Sahara's sand dunes, they will be driving on a more competitively level playing field this year. High finance will no longer have such an edge as mechanics following richer teams in chartered planes will only be allowed to service these cars every three or four days. Turbos are also barred this year, and new minimum weight restrictions have been introduced.

A vast medical and rescue team has been deployed to follow this year's event in an attempt to safeguard the competitors in a rally which has not only claimed more than its share of lives over the years, but which consolidated its reputation with the death of its founder. Thierry Sabine and four others were killed in a helicopter crash while following the rally in Mali. The event is now run by Sabine's father. This year, 30 aeroplanes, eight helicopters, teams of doctors and fleets of ambulances will be on hand to rescue those who fall by the wayside.

> 'This is not just a motor race, it is an education'

"This is not just a motor race, it is an education," says Partridge. "It is an overwhelming experience and we want to give it our best shot."

He and engineer, Parker, 42, face coaxing their Isuzu across dried-up riverbeds, potholed tracks and the sheer emptiness of the desert in the fierce heat of the day. Then, as temperatures plummet to below freezing at night, they must repair the ravages of the day, queue for fuel and food, put up a tent and study the route for the next day's section. If they are lucky, they may be able to snatch a couple of hours' sleep.

So why do they do it? "Where else in the world of motorsport can we line up with the former stars of Formula One and world rally champions, as well as others in our own position, in a situation where everyone is fighting against the conditions and not just each other?" says Partridge. "Where else can we test ourselves to the limit of our endurance, at the end of our tethers, knowing that losing our composure is a sure recipe for disaster?"

ALAN WELLER

Keith Parker, left, and Dick Partridge: "Where else can we test ourselves to the limit of our endurance, at the end of our tethers, knowing that losing our composure is a recipe for disaster?"

Partridge's first taste of motorsport came when he began go-karting at the age of 13. He bought his first speedway bike at 16 and went on to compete at Ipswich, Oxford, Weymouth and Eastbourne before quitting at 21 to set up a garage business.

At 25, Partridge fulfilled a long-standing ambition and learnt to fly. His competitive streak soon came to the fore when he began entering aerobatic contests. He was runner-up in the 1986 Scottish Open Championship and came second in the annual points table the following year.

The lure of motorsport soon became paramount again, however, and Partridge sold his plane to pay for his first entry in the Dakar rally. Parker's association with Partridge goes back to 1981, when the engineer went to work for him, helping to establish a dealership, workshop and MoT test centre at his garage. In 1984 he set up his own business, through which he helped prepare Partridge's vehicles for domestic rallies. His first taste of the ravages of the Dakar event came when he helped restore the Isuzu Trooper following its recovery from the desert in 1989. Two years later he followed the rally in the mechanics' plane, only to see a transmission failure put Partridge's vehicle out of action. Parker coaxed the Isuzu back to England by road from southern Libya.

Vaughan Freeman finds the Chrysler Voyager has style and space — and chairs on wheels

A moving way to solve the seat of the problem

VOYAGER LE

Engine: 3.3-litre V6, giving 156bhp at 4,700rpm, driving front wheels through four-speed automatic gearbox with overdrive.

Performance: Top speed 112mph. 0-60 in 11.5 seconds.

Economy: 32.5mpg overall.

Equipment: Seven seats arranged with two front, two middle and a three-seat rear bench.

Price: £24,995 for the V6 long wheelbase Grand Voyager LE; £23,695 for the V6 short wheelbase; £18,395 for the short wheelbase 2.0-litre SE.

A bag of house coal weighs close on half a hundredweight, or 25kg. To move two such bags at once needs serious muscle power. Yet the "Easy Out" removeable bench rear seats on Chrysler's all-new Voyager people carrier weigh in at 100lbs.

The smaller, removeable single seats weigh a mere 55lbs, or one sack of coal. Even Chrysler has recognised the problem, for the rear, heavier bench seat is fitted with, as Chrysler claims, "rollers that act like small landing gear" so the seat can be trundled away to the garage when not needed inside the car.

Not only are the seats heavy, they are bulky too. For the garage-less Voyager owner, the seats must presumably sit side by side with the front room sofa. Garage owners can either put the car in out of the cold, and the seats outside, or the car on the drive while the garage doubles as a furniture warehouse.

The dozen or so multi-purpose vehicles, or people carriers, now competing in the market, all give their owners similar challenges. To handle the poundings of adult passengers, and to surpass ever more rigorous safety requirements, car seats must be well engineered and strong, and that means heavy. The upside is that up to five seats in the versatile Voyager can be removed, giving a luggage space of Grand Canyon proportions.

The Voyager's advantages clearly outweigh the seat dilemma, if sales are any judge. In America, Chrysler is building around 700,000 a year; for Europe Chrysler plans initially to build a further 50,000 a year at its Austrian plant.

In Europe, Renault claims its Espace was the first "monobox" people mover, launched in 1984. In fact, Voyager went on sale in America a year earlier, and has since sold around six million units, making it far and away the world's best-selling MPV.

Child's play: landing gear-style rollers enable the back seats to be moved easily

This year Renault launches its dashboard-free Espace, from Toyota there is the new six-seat Picnic, as well as rivals from Ford, VW, Peugeot and Citroën, among many.

How does the Voyager compare? First, it is incredibly sleek. The nose, bonnet and windscreen are steeply raked, cutting wind resistance and wind noise and improving fuel economy at the same time. From the driver's seat, though, the bonnet falls away so sharply that it is impossible to see the front bumper or corners, and parking is a nervous affair for those unused to the proportions.

A huge plus are the giant sliding doors on each side for the rear passengers. Gone are the days of chipped door edges in tight parking slots. They are easy and light to operate, yet shut and lock with a reassuring thunk. Unsightly door runners are tucked away out of sight.

The very American-style positioning of the gear shift lever on a stalk mounted on the steering column is surprisingly easy to get used to, and, importantly, leaves the floor clear between driver and front-seat passenger.

The Voyager is very family-oriented, proof of which comes with 14 cupholders dotted around the interior, as well as useful cubby holes here, there and everywhere.

The Voyager arrives in March with a 3.3-litre 156bhp V6, and the 2.0-litre 16-valve engine taken from the Chrysler Neon saloon, matched to long and short wheelbase bodies. A 2.4-litre petrol and a 2.5-litre turbo diesel are also planned. The V6 version that I tried has plenty of power, even if it did seem to rev rather manically to deliver the extra pace needed to overtake at motorway speeds.

The short wheelbase version is 186ins long, a foot longer than the Citroën Synergie and Renault Espace, while the long wheelbase Voyager is an even lengthier 199ins. The Voyager is also 6ft tall and 6ft 6ins wide, so that the sliding doors come in handy, as do electrically folding wing mirrors that fold flat and then out again at the touch of a button.

American dimensions are matched by US levels of equipment. Air conditioning, anti-lock brakes and dual airbags are standard across the range, together with three years' warranty and roadside assistance cover.

Chrysler has spent $3 billion on the new Voyager, and a further $50 million converting it to right-hand drive. The fact there are at least a dozen MPV contenders in the market shows how fierce competition now is and why such investment is needed.

UK spokesman Peter Rawlinson says: "We expect to sell around 3,000 Voyagers this year, and the plan ultimately is to take 10 per cent at least of the UK people mover segment. The Ford Galaxy is the one to go for, because the Galaxy, and its identical sister car, the VW Sharan, take almost 50 per cent of the market and naturally we would like some of that."

Chrysler accepts that the prices for the Voyager start towards the top end of the Galaxy price range, pitching it head-on to the Espace, but hopes that the higher levels of standard equipment, and the larger dimensions, will woo motorists looking for something a little different.

Voyager: the world's best-selling MPV has a $3bn new look and right-hand drive

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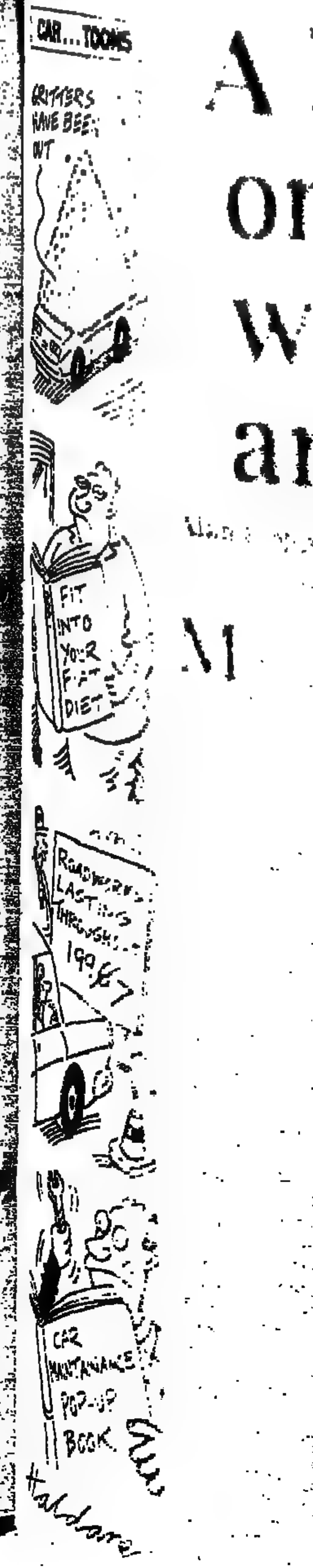


هكذا من الأصل

After strange adventures with the AA, Phil Butcher now provides doorstep service. **Eve-Ann Prentice** reports

A very, very nice man to take home

The AA patrolman was quietly horrified. A black labrador dog at the home of a prospective member cocked its leg and used an antique table leg as a canine latrine.

Phil Butcher, who had arrived to complete the paperwork for the home-owner to join the AA was "slightly embarrassed . . . I thought that, if I had this lovely house, I wouldn't let my dog do that".

The labrador had been sitting by the front door when Butcher arrived, and he assumed it was the man's pet. "When the dog, which trotted in when I was asked inside, sat up and had a pee, neither the gentleman nor his wife said anything. I was amazed.

"When we had completed all the paperwork and I was leaving, the dog stayed where it was and the man said 'Aren't you going to take your dog with you?'."

The experience was a typically zany example in the life of the AA patrolman. Now Butcher has abandoned his yellow patrol vehicle to hire himself out as a travelling mechanic, touring hundreds of square miles in one of the flattest and most windswept places in Britain.

It is the brainchild of carmakers, Seat, who have equipped Butcher, 40, with a white, hi-tech Alhambra van and the tools needed to carry out services and repairs at homes and workplaces in the Fens of Cambridgeshire and North Norfolk.

As he begins his new life as a travelling, personal mechanic, he revealed some of the outrageous moments which show how colourful the life of the AA man can be. His experiences include looking aghast as the man whose car he had been towing suddenly appeared running down the road alongside him.

"It was dark and raining when I arrived to give the man a tow. He said he had been towed before and everything was going OK when I heard this banging noise. I looked to the side and saw the gentleman running down the road alongside me when I was doing about 10mph. He said he had just thought of a short cut! I told him it was a bit naughty to leave the car."

Then there was the saga of the Frenchman. One of Butcher's colleagues asked for assistance after being baffled trying to find a fault in a car belonging to a man who spoke no English. The car was on a ramp, various parts were strewn around and the car-owner was gesticulating wildly when Butcher arrived to help.

"I soon realised the foreign gentleman was French and that there was nothing wrong with his car," he says. "He had just stopped to ask directions!"

The pursuit of being a very, very nice man was not a little painful when Butcher was approached by a female AA member driving a Mercedes who complained the car was overheating. She said she could not open the windows to talk to him while he worked as she had a nervous Siamese cat inside which was desperate to escape.

Butcher, who was in the middle of dealing with another customer, quickly diagnosed the problem and was about to return to his first client 200 yards down the road, when the woman absent-mindedly wound down her car window to thank him.

"The cat flew out and the woman was very distraught. I ended up with a can of cat food and a fork from the lady's boot, on a roundabout in the middle of a very busy junction searching for the cat while the woman became more and more agitated. After 45 minutes I saw two pointed ears in the middle of some nettles. I leapt at him, managed to grab him and, non-too gently because I was not going to let go, managed to get him back to his owner. It was only then that I remembered the customer I had left 200 yards down the road . . ."

Now Butcher has abandoned roadside crises to take his expertise to people's homes. The idea behind the travelling mechanic scheme is to persuade people to buy a Seat car even though there may be no Seat dealer within miles. The contracted-out AA man will go to the car and carry out the work from his van. This way, Seat hopes, potential customers will be reassured that they can have their cars serviced without undertaking a trek across miles of treeless terrain which can be deeply inhospitable in winter.

Although it is a Seat scheme, anyone with any make of car living in the flat, be-dyked area can use the service, which costs £21.25 an hour plus VAT "from the moment the bonnet is opened, not from the time I set out", says Butcher. Some garages in the area charge £36-£37 an hour.

As the number of car companies proliferates, the number of dealerships has been dwindling, and would-be buyers in rural areas can feel cut off from help should anything go wrong after they have taken the car home.

Butcher, who keeps a large stock of spares at his home and workbase at Littleport, near Ely, is anxious to avoid treading on dealers' toes: "I reckon I can do anything which doesn't need a ramp, but if there is anything I can't do, I would refer the customer to the best dealer I know for the job."

His area stretches from Wisbech in Cambridgeshire to Fakenham, Downham Market, King's Lynn and Wells in Norfolk.

"This is not a nine to five job and if anyone wants me on a Saturday morning if necessary, I will do it," he says.

Although as an AA man he has become accustomed to working under a bonnet or wrenching at wheelnuts in the sort of Siberian-blown weather which only the Fens can dish up, Butcher has devised himself a key comfort for working from the Seat Alhambra which is his mobile garage. He persuaded a Cambridge sail-maker to rig up a sheltering polypropylene canopy which can fit between his van and the car on which he is working.

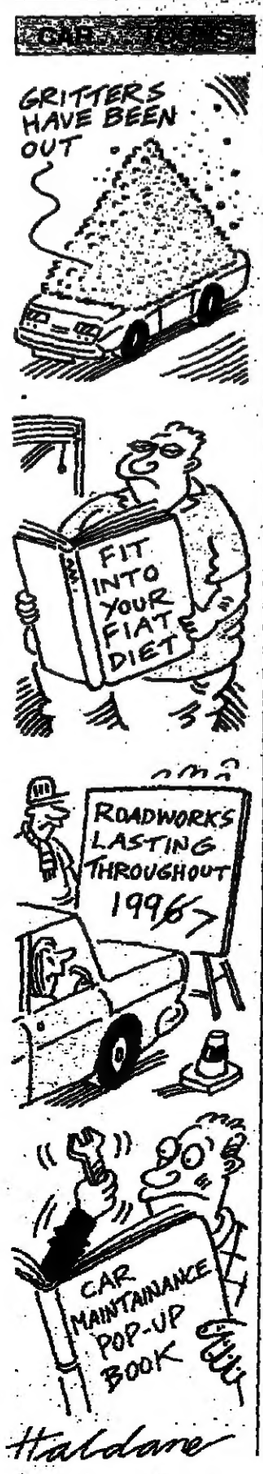
"I designed it because everything I was shown had poles or attachments which could damage the customer's car," he says. "This has no sharp materials and is light and easy to put up and only cost £120."

Kevin Rose, Seat's Director of Sales, sees scope for expansion of the scheme: "We could have technicians all over the country."

You can telephone Phil Butcher on his mobile phone during working hours on 0410 070338 or on 0500 22 22 22.

ROBIN MAYES

Have grease gun, will travel: Phil Butcher services Angie Fairhurst's Seat Ibiza in her works car park. "If there's anything I can't do, I would refer the customer to the best dealer I know for the job"



A booted one that will run and run

Alan Copps finds the Renault Megane Classic in the best French traditions

My wife, Anna, swears by her basic transport, a boxy-looking Renault 9 that she inherited from her father about ten years ago.

Its bronze paint is faded and the seats creak a bit — I've even noticed a hint of moss around the rear screen seal. But it always starts first time, even in this week's bitter cold, is miserly on fuel around town and will happily cruise a motorway at 70mph.

The odometer is fast approaching the 100,000-mile mark, but the car plugs on with running costs that consist of routine oil and water checks, the occasional minor repair and a once-a-year pre-MoT service. The cares of depreciation and resale value are long past: "It's virtually free motoring, now," Anna gleefully reminds me as I quote the price of the latest car I've been given to test.

I suspect that in a dozen more years motorists will be able to say the same about the Renault Megane Classic, the booted version of the French company's succesful lower-medium range model. The virtues of this car are very much in line with those of the faithful old 9: a comparitively simple car that promises utter reliability with a clever combination of passenger and luggage space.

I've often been impressed by the interior space of the Renault 9, even compared to some current vehicles in the same class, and the boot has rarely proved anything but adequate to the needs of a family on the move.

But in both these departments the Megane Classic represents a huge step forward. The boot is little short of phenomenal: at 510 litres, Renault claims that it is not only much larger than any competitor in the lower-medium segment — the likes of the Ford Escort, Vauxhall Astra and Peugeot 306 — but is bigger than that of many cars from two classes above, such as the Jaguar saloon, BMW 5-Series and Audi A6. Renault also points out that it offers more luggage capacity than any of their own hatchbacks.

I cannot pretend that I had the opportunity to check all these claims in a week's test drive, but I can say that the boot will take a 5ft-plus Christmas tree with a tendency to splay out in all the wrong places, an avalanche of presents and several bags of supermarket shopping and still close with room to spare.

Just in case that's not sufficient — should, for example, you wish to move a wardrobe in your saloon — the rear seats are split to fold in combination and since the folding mechanism includes the seat cushion as well as the backrest the flat load area offered comes close to that of some estate cars.

The only snag with this enormous boot is that it does nothing for the car's aesthetics, but then styling has never been the principal reason for buying a Renault and a bit of bulk at the back end is a small price for such practicality.

The huge boot may be the most remarkable feature of this car, but it is not the only one. The interior space also matches that of cars such as the Ford Mondeo and Vauxhall Vectra, and the cabin offers excellent visibility.

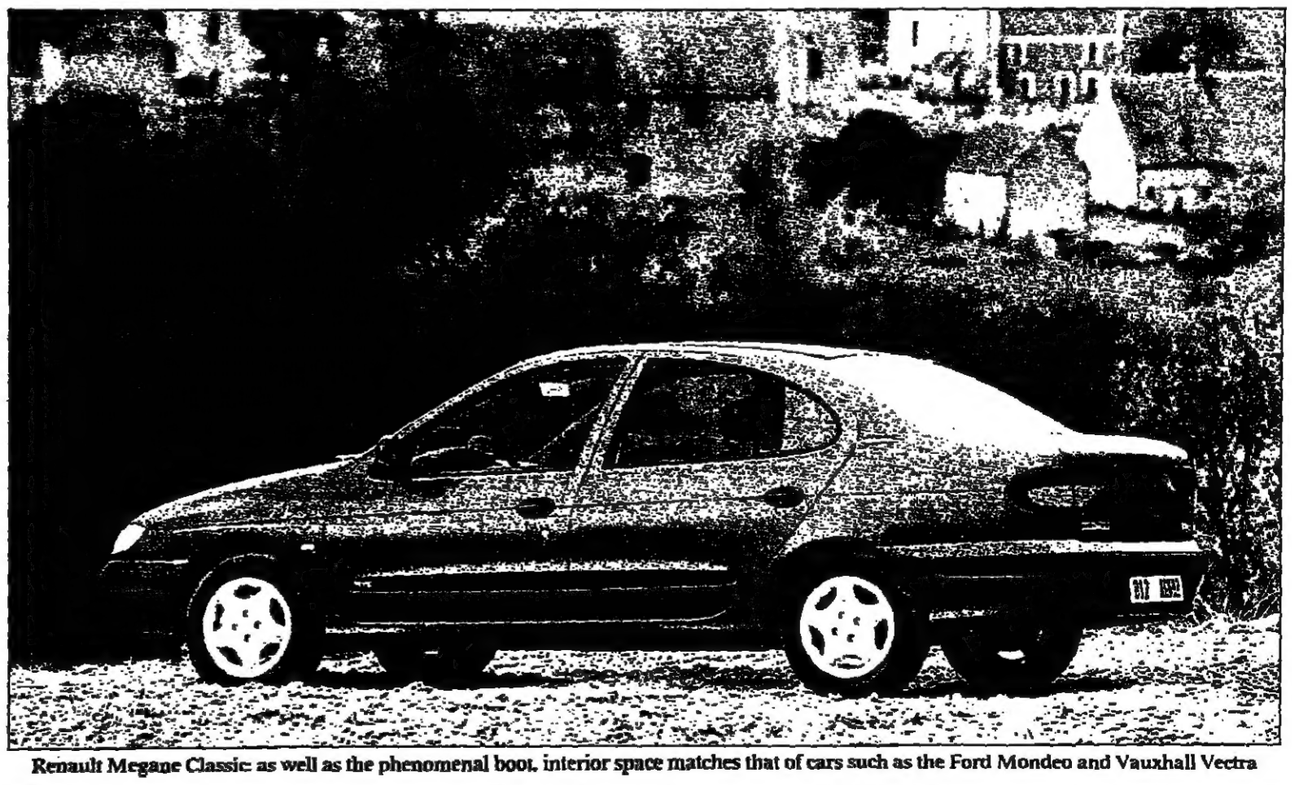
The controls are very simple and convenient and a comfortable driving position is easy to achieve. The performance of the RT version I tried was hardly startling but would easily meet everyday needs.

One big difference between this, or almost any modern car, and its predecessors such as the 9 is the amount of attention paid to safety and security. One of Renault's innovations in this area is the Programmed Restraint System which works on the seat-belt pretensioners to slow the rate at which passengers suffer deceleration in an emergency stop. It is said to offer better protection against neck, thorax and head injuries.

The Megane Classic comes with a choice of 1.6-litre and 2-litre petrol engines or 1.9-litre diesel in either naturally aspirated or turbo form. The fuel economy for the turbo diesel is exceptional, with a claimed 62mpg at a constant 56mph and over 40 in town: this would give a touring range of 617 miles on a single tank. The 1.6-litre petrol version offers 36.5mpg at a constant 56mph and 34.4mpg in town.

Another big advantage is that Renault prices "now include delivery, three years' RAC membership and "3,2,1 Peace of Mind package" — three years' warranty, two years' free servicing and one years' road fund licence.

Whether this Megane will prove to be a real Classic remains to be seen, but it is a worthy upholder of a tradition of economical and functional French motoring.



Renault Megane Classic: as well as the phenomenal boot, interior space matches that of cars such as the Ford Mondeo and Vauxhall Vectra

RENAULT MEGANE CLASSIC

Engine (1.6e RT): four-cylinder 1598cc producing 90bhp at 5,000rpm.

Transmission: Choice of five-speed manual or four-speed automatic.

Performance: Maximum speed 115mph: 0-62mph in 11.5 seconds.

Economy: 56.5mpg at constant 56mph; 34.4mpg urban cycle.

Price: £12,500 on the road.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ford raises prices, but includes extras

PRICES of most Ford cars and commercial vehicles are going up by an average of 1.7 per cent from Monday and, in line with many other makers, the company will quote on-the-road prices, including delivery, numberplates and road tax, in all future price lists. Exceptions to the rise include the Ka, Fiesta Classic and Escort Focus. The increase takes the on-the-road price of a Fiesta 3-door 1.25 LX from £9,805 to £9,945 and of a 2-litre Galaxy Aspen from £17,860 to £18,285.

Proton is also putting up prices by about 0.5 per cent, giving the Persona 5-door 1.8SEi an on-the-road tag of £13,665. For the next three months Proton is also offering all potential UK customers free use of a demonstration car for 24 hours, subject to driver status and mileage limitations.

Autosport on show

THE racing car show, Autosport International '97, runs at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, from Friday until Sunday. The Live Action arena features rally challengers, kart racing and quad bikes among other vehicles. Tickets and information: 0121-767 4747.

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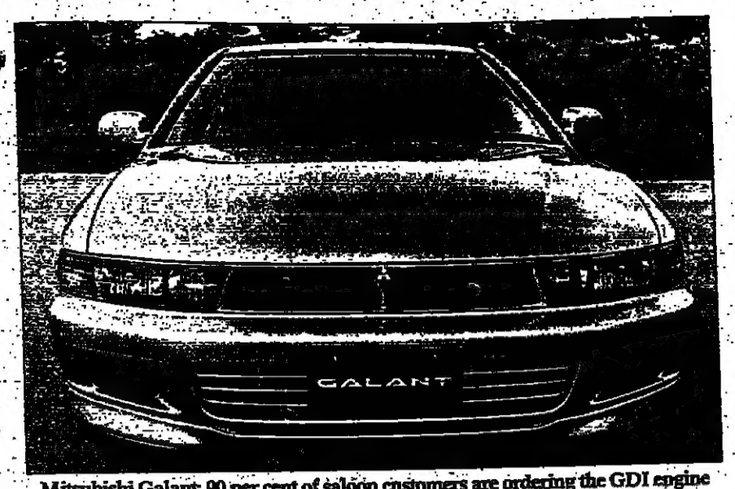
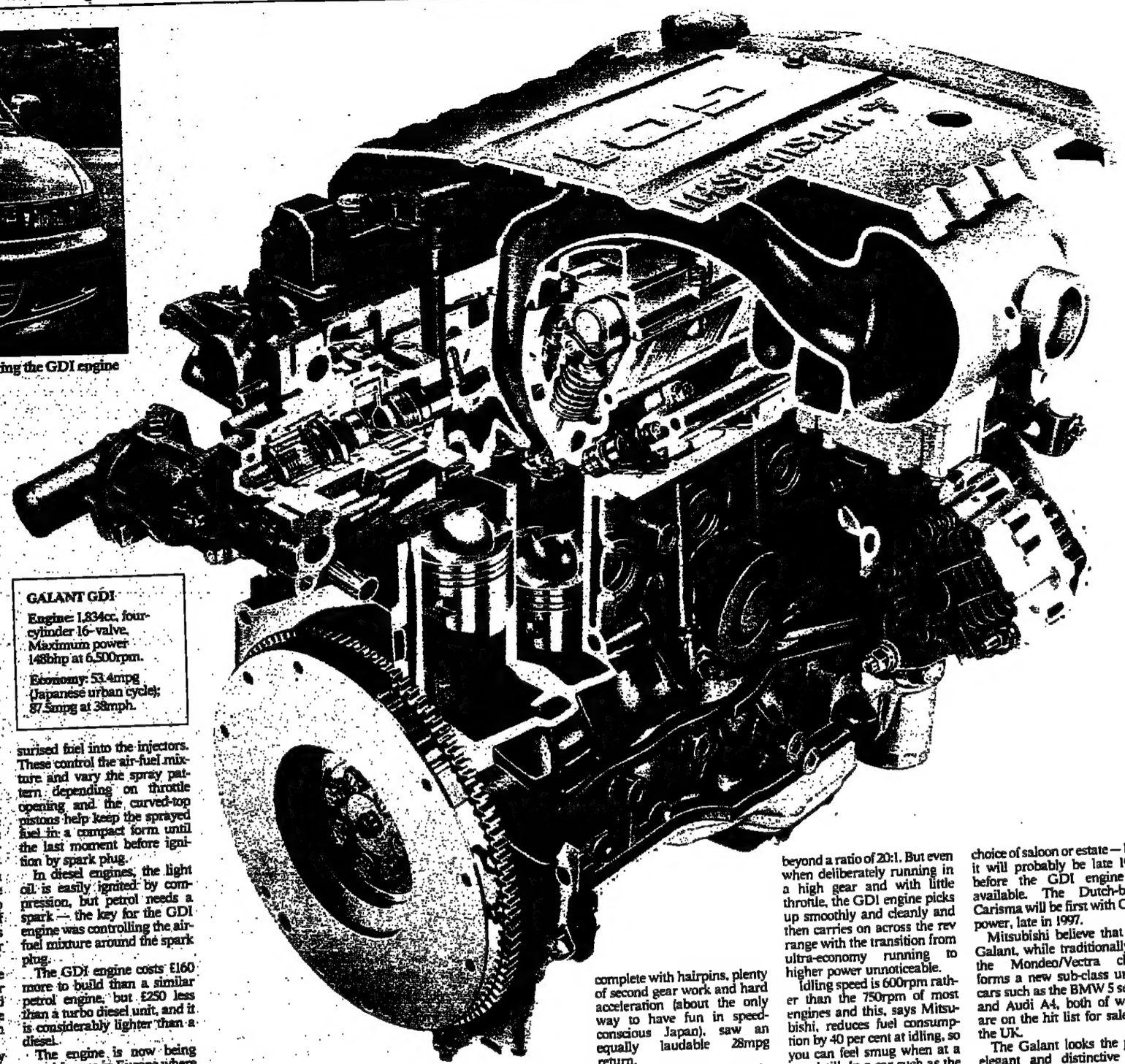
The next stage is GDI . . . **Anthony Lewis** on how Mitsubishi has found the Holy Grail of engine technology



Mitsubishi Galant: 90 per cent of saloon customers are ordering the GDI engine



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GALANT GDI

Engine: 1,834cc, four-cylinder 16-valve. Maximum power 148bhp at 6,500rpm.

Economy: 53.4mpg (Japanese urban cycle); 87.5mpg at 38mph.

First there was the carburettor, then in the late 1970s came fuel injection. Now in the search for petrol-powered economy, Mitsubishi can claim a huge leap forward with the gasoline direct injection (GDI) engine, already powering the new Galant in Japan and due to arrive in Europe next summer.

In terms of engine technology, it is a Holy Grail. It offers a 35 per cent improvement in fuel economy, a 10 per cent power increase over a conventional petrol engine and a reduction of between 70 and 90 per cent in harmful exhaust emissions.

Mitsubishi has been inundated with inquiries from its rivals, said Kazue Naganuma, the man in charge of international business for Mitsubishi Motors in Tokyo.

Among the first customers for the GDI Galant were Toyota and General Motors, even though Toyota is due to launch its own GDI engine shortly.

Mitsubishi plans to be magnaminous and make the technology available — at a price — when it can. More than 180 patents have been taken out to protect the invention and the company is working flat out to keep pace with domestic demand.

Orders for the Galant, Japan's Car of the Year, are running at almost three times the sales target, with 90 per cent of saloon customers wanting the GDI engine and one in three estate customers. The current waiting list is two to three months. Eventually half the 2.5 million petrol engines Mitsubishi builds each year will use direct injection.

The breakthrough came five years ago when, by using laser technology and high-speed cameras, engineers were able to study exactly what goes on at the moment of ignition.

In the GDI, petrol is directly injected into the cylinder, as in a diesel engine, but the injection timings are precisely controlled to match load conditions.

To achieve this, the GDI engine has an upright straight intake port to get the best airflow into the cylinder, a curved-top piston rather than a flat top to help the air-fuel mixture swirl towards the spark plug in a controlled pattern, and a high-pressure fuel pump that feeds pressurised fuel into the injectors. These control the air-fuel mixture and vary the spray pattern depending on throttle opening and the curved-top pistons help keep the sprayed fuel in a compact form until the last moment before ignition by spark plug.

In diesel engines, the light oil is easily ignited by compression, but petrol needs a spark — the key for the GDI engine was controlling the air-fuel mixture around the spark plug.

The GDI engine costs £160 more to build than a similar petrol engine, but £250 less than a turbo diesel unit, and it is considerably lighter than a diesel.

The engine is now being tuned for use in Europe where higher speeds and mileage create different demands, as do EC emission laws. The target, says Akira Kijima, head of the engine design department reponsible for GDI, is to keep economy close to the 35 per cent savings in Japan without affecting the higher power output.

He believes GDI bridges the gap between spark ignition petrol and compression ignition diesel, inheriting the benefits of both with none of the drawbacks.

There's a breathlessness about conventional lean-burn engines that makes them unrewarding to drive, especially at higher revs. And we all know that diesels, while fine once up and running, can be noisy and awkward at lower speeds, often needing a hefty right foot to make any headway.

A modest 80-mile drive — thankfully free of Japan's notorious traffic jams — suggested that Kijima was right.

The Galants used for the test were fitted with instant fuel consumption read-out devices. Bowling along the freeway at 50mph — fairly normal in Japan — produced an impressive 80mpg, while at 60mph it was 67mpg.

A 12-mile mountain road, complete with hairpins, plenty of second gear work and hard acceleration (about the only way to have fun in speed-conscious Japan), saw an equally laudable 28mpg return.

City driving was, thankfully, excused, but Mitsubishi claims a 5 per cent improvement over the best diesels with similar power — the 1.8-litre GDI unit produces 148bhp.

The clever bit in the development was the high-pressure fuel pump and injector that allows a 40:1 air-fuel ratio compared to a conventional engine's 15:1. Normally, combustion begins to detoriate beyond a ratio of 20:1. But even when deliberately running in a high gear and with little throttle, the GDI engine picks up smoothly and cleanly and then carries on across the rev range with the transition from ultra-economy running to higher power unnoticeable.

Idling speed is 600rpm rather than the 750rpm of most engines and this, says Mitsubishi, reduces fuel consumption by 40 per cent at idling, so you can feel smug when at a standstill. In a car such as the Galant a 1.8-litre engine might seem too small, but the GDI has the driveability of a two-litre (it is actually more powerful than Mitsubishi's current two-litre engine), a feeling enhanced by the flat torque curve giving plenty of usable power between 2,000rpm and 4,500rpm.

The Galant goes on sale in the UK in April next year with choice of saloon or estate — but it will probably be late 1998 before the GDI engine is available. The Dutch-built Carisma will be first with GDI power, late in 1997.

Mitsubishi believe that the Galant, while traditionally in the Mondeo/Vectra class, forms a new sub-class under cars such as the BMW 5 series and Audi A4, both of which are on the hit list for sales in the UK.

The Galant looks the part, elegant and distinctive and even in Japanese trim the ride and handling impressed. Best of all though was the steering which, unusually for Japan, was pin sharp and responsive.

Engine choices for the UK will be 2-litre, four cylinder and 2.5-litre V6. Features include side airbags and electronically-operated anti-trap windows. Prices will be between £16,600 and £25,000.

'I ended up in a lady's greenhouse. I bought her a hydrangea'

Derek Nimmo tells **Andrew Pierce** about an uncontrollable encounter in Olney

MARTIN BEDDALL

Derek Nimmo and his best-of-British-design Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit: "My wife is not so patriotic. She drives a Honda"

It's pantomime season again when big name soap stars compete for the applause with many forgotten faces from the small screen. The services of Derek Nimmo are always in demand, currently as Baron Hardup opposite Patsy Palmer from *EastEnders*, who has the lead role in *Cinderella* at the Theatre Royal in Bath.

He started his professional career at the Hippodrome Theatre, Bolton, more than 40 years ago. After a string of film and television series he was awarded the Royal Television Society's Silver Medal and is a former Variety Club Showbusiness Personality of the Year. An accomplished wit and raconteur, he won the Benedictine After Dinner Speaker of the Year Award in 1990.

Nimmo, who for 29 years has been a panellist on Radio 4 shows such as *Just a Minute*, is not seen so often on television these days. Since 1975 he has been presenting plays, featuring star comedy names, in 30 countries as diverse as Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand and Dubai.

In recent years Nimmo, the author of several books, has become a controversial figure in London clubland by leading the opposition to the admission of women members at his beloved Garrick Club. Don't tell Cinderella.

How did you first learn to drive?

I was taught by my father. A strict disciplinarian, he would probably have been better equipped as an instructor to a Panzer division. His tuition, although strict, was very meticulous. I passed my test at the first attempt.

What was your first car?

A 1937 Buick with running boards. The kind of transport much favoured by Mr Al Capone. My first marital home was a caravan and my wife and I invested our joint savings in the mobile home, leaving only £37 to buy a car. It did just eight miles to the gallon and even on our first trip, to play the Nottingham Empire, the petrol tank sprang a leak.

The journey was a distinctly unhappy one. Having been advised by a passing AA scout that the only way we could reach our goal in time was by sticking chewing gum over the hole, we took to masticating a Wrigley's Spearmint as we drove along the M1. Once it had achieved the necessary consistency we would leap out of the car, add further repairs to the hole, and speed on our way.

What car do you drive now, and why?

A Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit because it epitomises the best of British design. It also has plenty of room for my grandchildren and is extremely comfortable. My wife is not so patriotic. She drives a Honda.

Do you enjoy driving?

Not in the slightest. My wife is a very much better driver than I am. She has complete concentration, whereas I tend to look at the scenery.

What is your dream car?

In the early 1970s I had a huge Hooper-bodied S1 Bentley — aluminium body with a sunshine roof. At the time I was living near San Tropez and one has wondrous memories of driving to Monte Carlo, the car filled with children, and Elton John and James Taylor on the eight-track stereo.

What is your most hated car?

A canvas-sided Land Rover registration number MPJ 735. After the Buick finally blew up, my father bought me the Land Rover to tow the caravan. Alas, there was no heating in 1955 and the windscreen wiper was worked by a little machine outside the car. I was touring with Peter Brough and Archie Andrews at the time throughout a long cold winter. We would arrive at the next theatre totally frozen.

What do you listen to in the car?

Radio 4. Sometimes I hear myself on *Just a Minute*. It is most revealing. We do two programmes on the trot. Because it is so fast, with no hesitation or deviation, I can never remember a word I have said by the time I leave the studio.

What is your worst habit in the car?

Being a back seat driver.

What is the most unusual thing you have done in your car?

Last year I popped into the small Buckinghamshire market town of Olney to buy some Stilton. As I was manoeuvring the Rolls to leave, the accelerator became trapped beneath the carpet. The acceleration was horrendous. I instantly took off like a rocket, and within some 20 seconds I had destroyed three other cars, gone straight through a garden fence, knocked over a tree and ended up inside a frightfully charming lady's greenhouse. I switched off the key and bought her a hydrangea.

What infuriates you most about other drivers?

The unforgiveable increase in obscenties and vulgar gestures with which motorists seem today to express themselves when confronted by even the most minor frustration.

Have you ever had points on your licence?

I was given them some time ago. I was driving on a hard shoulder, because there was a queue of traffic, and a police car spotted me from the motorway bridge.

If you were Secretary of State for Transport, what is the first thing you would do?

I would make it absolutely clear that the speed limit is acceptable. Recently we were driving to Taunton. My wife kept the speed at 72mph, even when she saw she was being followed by a police car. They pulled us on to the hard shoulder. The officer said: "Do you realise you were doing 70mph in the middle lane? If you choose to drive on a motorway, you should do at least 80mph." I said: "But surely that is exceeding the speed limit by 10mph." "Maybe it is," said the officer from Thames Valley. "But in the middle lane you have to do 80." Extraordinary.

What is your favourite/most hated car ad?

Favourite: any that have scantily-clad women draped all over the bonnets. The one I hate: the advertisement for a Nissan Primera where the car goes off for a journey of its own.

'If you're desperate to get away from it all, this is how to get a long way away in a short time'

Helen Mound finds the ideal Tango-coloured antidote for the aftermath of Christmas

DOMINIC FRASER

The Lotus Esprit GT3: tantalisingly fast, stunning to look at, corners faster than some cars can manage on the straight and, pushed to the red line in every gear, wails like a cat in a midnight choir

Christmas is a difficult time of year. A three-day holiday of blissful family togetherness can so often turn into 72 unbroken hours of screaming spouse and feuding in-laws.

And New Year more often compounds Yuletide neurosis than offering any antidote. So if you are a shaking wreck emerging from the nether regions of a holiday from hell desperately seeking a pick-me-up why not try the Lotus Esprit GT3?

This Tango-coloured sports car will come screaming into your life like a whirling dervish, panting on your drive, waiting to be admired.

If you spent Advent proclaiming "Bah, humbug" to any mistletoe-wielding idiot who tried to get you into the festive spirit, and three days and three nights trapped with the in-laws has sent your stress levels into hyperspace, this could be just what you need. If you're desperate to get away from it all, this is how to get a long way away in a short time.

The Esprit GT3 is tantalisingly fast, stunning to look at, has ultra-sensitive steering, goes round corners faster than some cars can manage on the straight, and pushed to the red line in every gear it wails like a cat in a midnight choir.

Its 0-60mph sprint time of just over five seconds and top speed potential of 164mph is the perfect rush to cure post-Christmas blues. Further emotional abatement will come from the £39,450 price tag — not cheap I know, but it's £20,000 cheaper than the only other Esprit, the £59,995 V8. It's even £3,000 cheaper than the original "charge-cooled" version of the Esprit Turbo SE launched in 1989. It's remarkable that Lotus has managed to produce this miraculous bargain supercar.

The Norfolk-based company has had nothing but problems in the past few years: buyouts, closures and redundancies have been constantly threatened. And yet, in that time, Lotus has managed to develop the award-winning Elise, then the awesome Esprit V8 and now the stunning GT3. The company is on a roll.

Now its financial problems appear to have been resolved. Lotus has been bought by Proton, the Malaysian manufacturer, and things look promising. But the production of these three great sports cars is made all the more special by the fact that they were produced on a shoestring before the cavalry arrived in the shape of Malaysian investors.

The idea for the Esprit GT3 is similar to that of Porsche's 968 Clubsport and Lamborghini's Diablo SV. It has been stripped of its luxuries in the name of weight and performance, although the designers have allowed electric windows and door mirrors to stay. It's an exotic little niche market this one, for the driver who wants a supercar but can't bear to be without the "raw" feel of a proper sports car.

It wasn't a complicated project. Lotus wanted to put a gap between the Esprit V8 and the old 2.2 Turbo SE version. Fortunately, the company already had an engine that fitted the bill, a turbo-charged 2-litre unit used for Continental markets. So in went the 2-litre engine, out came the "executive-appealing" trim, and on to the new car's flanks went a historic motorsport name.

The result is a rip-roaring, no-holds barred, stuff-the-turkey, supercar. Inside, the same aggressive mood prevails. Echoing the idea of body-coloured mouldings inside Fiat's Barchetta and Coupé, the GT3's centre console is a bright splash of orange, as are the backs of the competition-style bucket seats. (There are two alternative body colours, green and silver, for more retiring customers.) What is odd, is that while this is the base "stripped-out" version, no Esprit interior has ever looked this good or felt this solid. A word of warning about those seats though — no one can maintain their dignity when clambering in and out of the deep buckets.

Fire-up this mid-engined supercar and you won't be immediately impressed. The engine is bad-mannered when idling, makes an unrewarding zinging sound at low revs, and thanks to good-old-fashioned turbo-lag, you need to pile on the revs before the GT3 gets on the pace. But once you're above 2500rpm, the GT3 — and your senses — will light up, and the throttle response on the move is staggeringly swift.

Take it wailing to the red line in second gear (that's for having to be so nice to the in-laws for so long), howl through the revs in third gear (and that's for sitting me next to your deaf Uncle Rupert at lunch): reach maximum revs in fourth and, unless your lucky enough to have your own race track, you'll spend the end of the holiday season in a 9ft by 12ft cell in solitary confinement. This is an astonishingly quick car and it's as well to treat its performance with respect, as it has a habit of creeping up on you unawares (honest, officer).

But what really excites about the GT3 is its cornering. Only a go-kart could respond more precisely. Make the slightest movement with the thick-rimmed steering wheel and the car reacts as if it has already read your mind. Only the deranged or racing drivers (one and the same thing, perhaps?) would deliberately try to push beyond the tyres' phenomenal dry-weather grip. This is what the motoring world calls "an engaging drive" and stress relief doesn't get any better.

The Esprit is 21 years old this year and it's clear that Lotus has found a fitting way to celebrate its coming of age with the GT3, the finest version yet of a legendary British sports car.

LOTUS ESPRIT GT3

Engine: 16-valve, four-cylinder, turbocharged 1973cc producing 240bhp at 6,250 rpm.

Transmission: Five-speed manual through rear wheels.

Performance: Top speed 164mph, 0-60mph in 5.1 secs.

Economy: Urban 14.9mpg; extra urban 32.8mpg; combined cycle 22.6mpg.

Equipment: Anti-lock brakes, power steering and electric windows, but there is no stereo. The factory will fit one as a £445 option.

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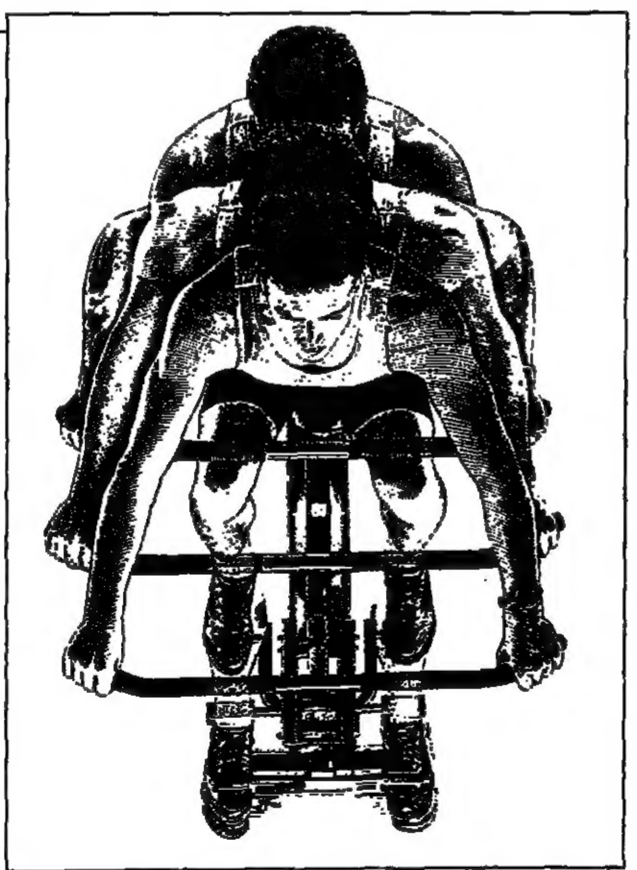

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Bull-bar deaths questioned

Jonathan Prynn on figures that shift the blame

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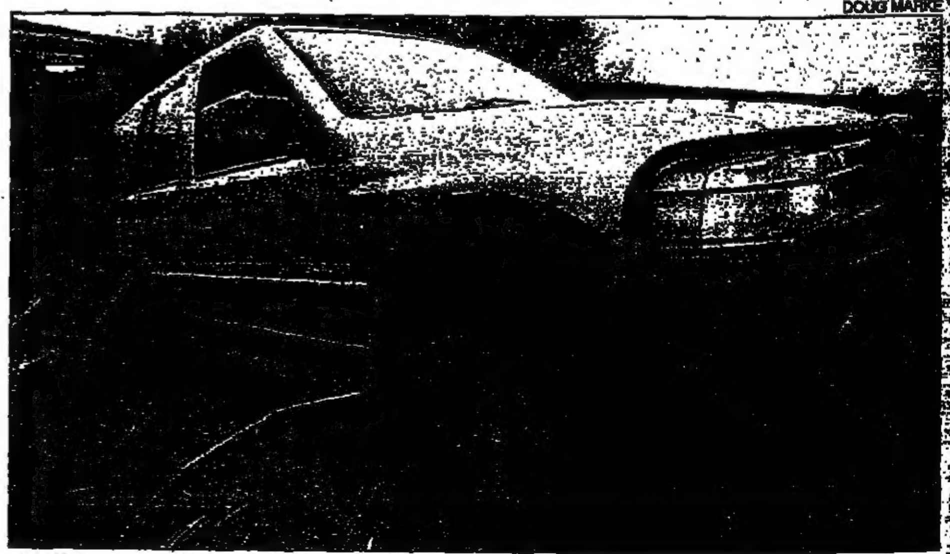

Bull-bars: unrelenting attack from politicians and safety groups since a series of fatalities

Estimates of the number of people killed by steel "bull-bars" attached to the front of four-wheel-drive vehicles may be hugely overstated, latest research has found.

The Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) has downgraded its figure for the number of deaths caused each year by bull-bars from 35 to two or three, and the number of injuries from 350 to 40.

The figures are based on a survey of accidents during 1994 in which vehicles with bull-bars injured cyclists or pedestrians.

Brian Hardy, a safety expert at the TRL who studied the data from the smashes, said: "As a result of this study of reported accidents, we are now able to revise our estimates of the numbers of deaths and serious casualties caused by bull-bars from their initial high levels.

"The available accident data provides evidence of only two or three deaths and 40 serious casualties resulting directly from the presence of bull-bars.

"These current estimates are much lower than most previous estimates but, in relation to the number of vehicles fitted with bull-bars, the increases are still significant."

The use of bull-bars has come under unrelenting attack from politicians and safety groups since a series of high profile fatal accidents involving vehicles with bull-bars in the early 1990s.

Steve Norris, the former transport minister, said last year that he would ban them if he had legal powers to do so, but was prevented by European trade rules.

Paul Flynn, the Labour MP for Newport West who has led campaigns against bull-bars, said: "Bull-bars remain the most obvious manifestation of the move from defensive to offensive driving and fly in the face of moves towards more pedestrian-friendly fronts to cars." He is to introduce a Bill to the Commons to ban bull-bars on January 14.

Edmund King, head of campaigns for the RAC, said: "The TRL itself admits that 'there is a huge degree of uncertainty' about bull-bars. The safety case against them has been highlighted in several tragic accidents when the coroner and police officers expressed the view that bull-bars made the injuries worse. Any fashion accessory which makes a vehicle more dangerous must be opposed in the interests of road safety."

Richard Freeman, of the AA, said: "It is only possible to estimate the harmful effects of bull-bars, although it is quite obvious that if you bolt pieces of metal to the front of a vehicle it will concentrate the impact in a particular area.

"You do not have to be a genius to work out that it will cause more harm to a pedestrian or another vehicle if they are hit by a bull bar. It is also clear that bull-bars are more dangerous to a pedestrian if they are hit by a vehicle at the same speed than one that is not fitted with them."

An estimated 500,000 vehicles in the UK are fitted with the metal bars, originally designed to protect the front of Australian farm vehicles from the effects of striking kangaroos. Some manufacturers have already begun to replace them with "soft" bars made from plastic compounds that inflict less damage.

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